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FRANCE REFUSES TO LEAP

THOUGH some electors in last Sunday's Referendum in France may have voted "Yes" on the ground that even an imperfect constitution would be better than no constitution at all, a considerably larger number were expressing, by an adverse vote, their general discontent at the Provisional Government's failure (for which it can hardly, in fairness, be blamed) to solve completely the problems of shortages and economic reconstruction. More important, however, was the fact that the M.R.P. and the groups of the Right, now united in the Republican Party of Liberty, had succeeded, with the potent aid of the Church, in labelling the proposed constitution "the Communist draft," though it was in fact endorsed not merely by the Socialist Party but by the *Confédération Général du Travail*. In the 53 per cent. majority which represented the "Noes" there were included in all probability a substantial proportion of Right-wing Socialists, alarmed at the prospect of a Single Chamber constitution and an Assembly in which the June elections might have resulted in a Communist and Socialist majority, leading to a two-Party coalition in which the Socialists would be junior partners.

To infer from the result of the Referendum that French opinion has swung decisively to the Right would almost certainly be erroneous. The factor which has emerged is that the French *petit bourgeois*—the small *rentier*, the little shopkeeper, and the modestly well-off farmer—remains a force whose strength the Left had underestimated. This large section of the electorate was voting, not for authoritarian Clericalism or for the abandonment of the radical social reforms for which last October's voting appeared to give a mandate; it was voting against giving absolute power to an assembly virtually without any constitutional "checks and balances." It was clearly apprehensive of the results which might follow from the denial of any effective power either to the Consultative Council of the French Union or to the President of the Republic.

This being so, it does not follow that the elections, which will now have to be held next month to bring into being another Constituent Assembly with a life limited to a maximum of seven months, will show significant gains either by the extreme Right or by the predominantly Clerical M.R.P. More probably the Radical Socialists, anti-Clerical but traditionally the defenders of small property, will recover seats at the expense of the Socialists, who may expect some defections among their middle-class supporters. Whether there will also be Communist gains among the industrially organised workers is problematic. What is evident is that the new Assembly, which (it is to be hoped) will make the constitution the first item in its programme of work, will have to make concessions to the very real middle-class fears in France of a "totalitarian" trend. Only so can it hope to secure approval of a draft constitution by the next plebiscite, and thus bring to an end the present unsatisfactory phase of provisional government.

The Powers and the Treaties

The Foreign Ministers' Conference in Paris staggers on from one inconclusive bargaining position to another. Over the Italian Treaty deadlock soon became absolute. This item on the agenda was accordingly shelved in favour of discussion of the Treaties with Finland and the three ex-enemy Balkan countries. Was it the calculation that, if Mr. Molotov got his own way in relation to countries which the Conference might recognise as falling within the Russian sphere of influence, he would be more accommodating in assenting to the theses of the Western Democracies in respect to Italy and the Mediterranean? Such a deal would not be inconsistent with the atmosphere of hard bargaining which had already been imported into the discussions. When the crucial issue of Trieste arose, the Russian delegate seems to have argued that ethnic considerations should be subordinate to economic. In Italian hands Trieste would not serve the needs either of Yugoslavia or Central Europe; the city should therefore pass into Yugoslav sovereignty, with due safeguards for freedom of the port. As an offset to this sacrifice by Italy, Yugoslav claims to financial reparations should be waived, and so should Greek claims in the event of the Dodecanese being ceded to Greece. As for the Italian colonies, Mr. Molotov—arguing that "independence" for Libya would be a cover for the establishment there of a British military garrison—appeared to be inclined to support the French proposition that Cyrenaica and Tripolitania should come (as Mr. Byrnes proposed) under collective Uno trusteeship, but with Italian administrators. This set of proposals met with firm Anglo-American dissent, backed—at any rate in the matter of Trieste—by M. Bidault. Recording disagreement, the Ministers turned towards the Balkans, where agreement on the issues (at once sharply raised) of control of the Danube and trade access was blocked from the beginning because Eastern Europe is regarded by America as a market, and by Russia as a security zone.

The spectacle of this wrangling between the Big Three, on whose agreement the life or death of our society depends, is nauseating. Everyone knows that both ethnic and economic arguments are disingenuous. Trieste (and the same may be said of each of the disputed regions) is treated, not as a town where people live, but as an Adriatic base of importance in a war between Russia and the West. The Powers do not negotiate as Allies, but as likely future enemies. And even on this appalling assumption no one knows whether the arguments make any sense, since no one knows what the strategy of atomic warfare would be.

Britain and Egypt

The Government has wisely decided to accede without procrastination to the Egyptian demand that the evacuation of British troops should be agreed in principle, before the Treaty negotiations proper begin. Egyptian nationalism has developed prodigiously since Mr. Eden negotiated the 1936 Treaty. Every Egyptian now feels the presence of a large British Army as a gross infringement of Egyptian sovereignty and regards

our readiness to agree to its withdrawal as the acid test of the genuineness of our intentions to treat Egypt as an equal. Mr. Attlee said that the Government had no intention of shirking its responsibility for the defence of the Suez area. On the contrary, the agreement to withdraw British troops was a prerequisite for concerting any defence plans whatsoever with the Egyptians. To argue, as Mr. Eden and Mr. Churchill did, that the strategic interests of the Empire must not be sacrificed for political considerations was to miss the whole point. In reality, the defence of the Suez Canal can only be secured on the basis of a political settlement which convinces the Egyptians that in future our relations will be not those of a suzerain power with an inferior, but of two equal peoples, freely entering into arrangements for mutual self-defence. To begin the Treaty negotiations by this dramatic break with the Imperial tradition may not satisfy the Wafd, which will probably raise objections if the Treaty proves to include provisions for the extensive installations which the British Staffs may hold to be necessary for mutual defence. But these risks are far outweighed by the advantages gained. At long last a British Government is not merely paying lip service to the equality and independence of a Middle Eastern nation.

Early Greek Plebiscite ?

The news that the British Government has asked for American concurrence in an early plebiscite on the Monarchy in Greece shows how rapidly the situation has deteriorated. Only five weeks ago Mr. Bevin was supposedly trying to control the irresponsibility of the Populists, first by marrying them off to the Republican Right and, secondly, by adhering to the policy of deferring the plebiscite until 1948. To-day that policy of "moderation" is being abandoned; and the British, not the Populists, are making the concessions. An early plebiscite will in fact mean the return of the King. At the time of the election it was generally thought that the King might get a bare majority; in a month or two's time the Terror will have made it safe. Hardly a day has gone by since March 31st without a new act of suppression; and although the British have vetoed some of the more outrageous appointments they have not prevented the quiet purge of Republicans which has been going on without a pause. International Observers will be no safeguard: the Terror will have done the work long before they arrive, and their presence will merely whitewash a piece of phoney electioneering.

Alternatives to the Loan

Going to press before the fate of the American Loan in the Senate is known, we can only speculate on what will happen if it is either rejected or postponed further. Neither of these things need mean that there will be no credits available for Great Britain from the United States; for, in addition to the possibility of arranging private trade credits, it would be feasible to approach the Import-Export Bank for a loan of a commercial character uncomplicated by all the awkward political conditions attached to the present loan scheme. There are now a good many people who think we should have done better to make this approach in the first instance, and that, if we had done so, a loan could have been arranged with comparatively little difficulty. Of course, it would have been a much smaller sum than the loan at present under discussion, and the Lease-Lend problem would have been left unsettled. It would not have solved the difficulty of the British balance of payments over the coming years; but it could have tided us over for the time being. This is the type of loan we may have to fall back on now, if Congress fails to ratify the Agreement. We should then have to decide whether to spend quickly the proceeds of this smaller loan, in the hope of being able to make other arrangements before long, or to husband it at the cost of a considerably increased austerity.

Bretton Woods and the Sterling Area

The prospects, if the loan does not go through, are far from pleasing, especially in the short run. But there are quite considerable compensations. We should be free of the exceedingly awkward pledges we were forced to give in respect of our trade policy, and, if we chose, be free also of our Bretton Woods commitments; for we have clearly told the United States that we shall not be in a position to carry these out unless the Loan goes through. This raises an awkward point. Under the Bretton Woods Plan, as soon as it begins actually to work, we shall be entitled to draw on the International Monetary Fund in return for our sterling subscription to it. This, however, would yield us no immediate relief, as we should have to contribute to the Fund, in actual gold or dollars, practically as much as we should be entitled to draw out of it during the first year of its working. It would be of help during the next year or two, but at a very heavy cost; and, on balance, it would appear most unwise to accept the heavy obligations involved in it in return for very little help. It has, however, to be reckoned with that the Import-Export Bank might refuse any loan at all unless we continued to be bound by Bretton Woods; and in that event we should be really up against it. What would then be the best course to follow depends on the prospects of making, in the not too distant future, effective arrangements for supplying most of our needs from inside the sterling area, and of reducing the "hidden" imports involved in the maintenance of large armed forces abroad.

Turkey and Democracy

Under pressure from public opinion—which has been disturbed by the recent sentences passed upon the editors of the two principal democratic newspapers in Turkey—President Inonu has called a conference for May 10th to discuss the introduction of democratic changes into the programme of the official People's Party. This is obviously in preparation for the elections scheduled for next September. After Turkey's signature of the United Nations Charter, an opposition section of the People's Party consisting mainly of Liberals, and led by Celal Bayar, once Minister of National Economy, combined with some Socialists and Independents to form the Social-Democratic Party. The party had some considerable backing from business circles and from civil servants, workers and professional people who opposed the present limitations on free speech and organisation, and who have been suffering from the inflationary results of Turkey's prolonged economic crisis, due partly to wartime trade restrictions but also to the unsound and corrupt policy of the administration. Opposition from these groups was tolerated so long as their activities did not seem to imperil the grip of the People's Party, but once the ruling group realised the danger presented by a united Opposition, intimidation began again, stimulated, no doubt, by the Social-Democratic Party's demand for friendly relations with the U.S.S.R. The recent anti-Communist student demonstrations were actually disguised activities of the People's Party, directed against the two democratic papers *Tan* and *La Turque*, and were led by police in civilian clothes who collected tools for smashing the papers' presses from a club run by the People's Party. Although this took place under a state of siege and the editor of *Tan* had two days previously asked for police protection against the impending attack, no arrests were made. On the contrary, the editors themselves were arrested, ill-treated and sentenced to a year's imprisonment for having "humiliated the honour of the great National Assembly." If elections take place under these conditions there is no prospect that they will be fair.

Iron and Steel

The detailed plans for the reorganisation of the iron and steel industry, now published as a White Paper, are primarily directed at technical problems. Both the Iron and Steel Federation and the Iron Council have drafted proposals for the construction of more efficient plant—which involve rebuilding 40 per cent. of the industry—and for the expansion of pig iron output by 25 per cent. and steel by 15 per cent., to a total of just over 15,000,000 tons a year. Apart from the indirect exposure of the present technically backward state of the industry, the plans say very little about its financial structure—which is largely responsible for the present state of things. Neither costs nor the questions of cartels and price-regulation are discussed, although projects for technical rationalisation are integrally associated with these problems. The Federation may believe that, left to itself, the industry would be able to raise the necessary £168 millions required to carry the plan through, but can the country permit the direction of so much of its resources into a single industry without requiring a very considerable control over the way in which they are used? Is the Federation, in fact, able to guarantee that the money would be spent along the lines indicated in the plan? Although highly integrated, the big steel companies are still fairly free agents and might well object to carrying out any specific proposal which conflicted with the particular interests of any firm. In that case, either the State must dictate what is to be done, or the Federation must be endowed with some powers of compulsion. And, as far as the Iron Council is concerned, the foundries are even less closely organised. The plans, however, provide some valuable proposals on the technical side, of which the Ministry of Supply will doubtless take due account in drafting the schedule of work for the new Steel Control Board.

Ships but No Wheat

Against the darkening background of world famine, the further economies which are to be enforced in British food consumption will do something to meet the needs of hungry Europe. The extraction rate of flour is to be raised temporarily to 90 per cent., involving a drastic reduction in the rations of feed for livestock; and the output of biscuits is to be cut by 25 per cent., part of the consequential saving in sugar being appropriated for an increase in the sweet ration. Unhappily, these sacrifices by Britain—and the loss of 300,000 tons a year of feeding stuffs will be serious from the aspect of pig and poultry farms—are being nullified by the continuing and progressive failure by the United States to make good its promise of a monthly export of one million tons of cereals. Ships there are in plenty, but the grain cannot be got to seaboard. In April, U.S. wheat exports amounted to less than 600,000 tons and even this monthly rate has so far not been maintained in May. As a result, Unrra is to receive less than five-sevenths of its promised allocation and, still more serious, the last meeting of the Combined Food Board decided to allocate only 265,000 tons to India in May, as compared with her minimum demand for 500,000 tons monthly. India's plight is presumably the chief motive for the decision to send Mr. Herbert Morrison to Washington.

The Woman Engineer

The engineers and their employers have failed to agree on the question of women's wages. The Unions are demanding for the women engaged on jobs regarded as normally "women's work" a wage equal to that paid to male labourers, whereas the employers are still standing out for a separate women's rate. The relative position of the women has, of course, been considerably improved in comparison with what it used to be: in the first World War an unceasing struggle had to be carried on over the issue of a minimum wage of not more than £1 a week. In those days the skilled engineers did not accept women into their Unions: to-day, the A.E.U. has a large female membership and stands for the principle of sex equality. While disagreeing about the

immediate wage issue, the two sides were in agreement on the desirability of holding an inquiry into the whole problem of the rating of jobs, in order to establish a wage-structure less illogical than that which has grown up at haphazard over the past generation. This is obviously a big task, which will take a considerable time; it raises a great many complex issues in so diversified an industry, or group of industries, as engineering. It ought, however, to be tackled; and it is to be hoped that the immediate wages dispute will not stop this from being done.

The Farm Workers' Wage

The agricultural workers have at last been awarded an advance, but of only 10s. a week, which will hardly satisfy them for long. The short-run problem of making work on the land attractive enough to secure a sufficient labour force without compulsion has not been solved; and even now, with compulsion, the deficit is being made up by a large continued use of prisoners of war. The obstacle in the way of higher wages is, partly, that the Government does not want to add yet more to the large subsidies on food, but also, partly, that farmers are mistrustful of what is to happen when the subsidies come off or begin to be scaled down. In the long run, agriculture, even with an increased output, will probably use a smaller labour force; for there is still immense room for mechanisation and "industrial farming"; and, obviously, the higher wages are, the further this tendency will have to be carried if the farmer is to produce on an economic basis. It is, however, entirely out of the question to settle our long-term food production policy at present: it is too much tied up with wider issues of international commercial policy that are still unsolved. No wage solution of a lasting nature could be expected as matters stand; and the Agricultural Wages Board's concession is at any rate a recognition that the farm workers' case was too strong to be resisted altogether. Whether the advances given to women will be enough to attract any large number of recruits remains to be seen. It is important that this should happen; for clearly the days when farming could be carried on almost entirely by male labour have gone for good.

Scientists and Secrecy

The case of Dr. Nunn May is bewildering and disturbing. A scientist, whose admirable services to atomic research and whose exemplary character the Attorney General acknowledged, is sentenced to 10 years' penal servitude. He pleaded guilty to the charge under the Official Secrets Act of disclosing information, on an unknown date, to an unknown person. The fact that the information was about atomic research he himself disclosed to M.I.5. Indeed the only substantial evidence against him was his own statement inculpating himself. His opposition to secrecy is shared by his colleagues in the scientific world; and, if he had pleaded "Not Guilty," and taken his stand on principle, he would have had their active support. But he avowed his guilt, and exposed himself to the strictures of Mr. Justice Oliver that he was a dishonourable man who had "the crass conceit to arrogate to himself to do what he did knowing that it was one of the country's most precious secrets." The principle of scientific secrecy is still at stake. While the Attlee-Truman-King Declaration, the instructions to Uno's Atomic Commission and the terms of the British Government's Bill (reinforced by the emphatic assurances of Mr. John Wilmot) all provide that there shall be no restraint upon the disclosure of *basic* scientific information, the exceptionally severe sentence on Nunn May underlines the warnings of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Ernest Bevin to the jibbing scientists. It may be "crass conceit" for an individual scientist to decide what is best for the safety of mankind, but it makes it all the more important for scientists, collectively, to decide where they stand and to see that that stand is clearly understood and endorsed by Governments.

PARLIAMENT: Back to Dizzy

Wednesday

It is perhaps worth recording—so quickly does the spoken word pass into oblivion—that the Tory opposition to the Health Bill developed into one of the greatest parliamentary fiascos which even the oldest Members can remember. In three days of debate not one point of sufficient substance to justify a vote against the second reading was produced.

The Bill to nationalise Civil Aviation had its second reading on Monday—to the chagrin of those members who consider that 3-line whips should not interfere with a week-end in the country. But Gaffer Morrison thinks otherwise and there was a duly heavy attendance in the division lobbies. The debate was not quite the occasion it might have been, as nobody succeeded in arguing effectively against the inescapable common sense with which Morrison opened it. However, Tory champions of the railway and shipping companies argued stoutly to their briefs and there were some pungent speeches in defence of a lost cause. The speech of the day came (not for the first time in this Parliament) from Mikardo (Reading), who showed real insight and erudition in a noteworthy speech. He ranged over the whole subject and in 28 minutes succeeded in substantiating the Government's case, demolishing the Opposition amendment and offering some shrewd criticisms of his own on the administration of the scheme. Mikardo demands attention on all subjects concerned with industrial organisation.

Ivor Thomas did his best in winding up for his Department against a barrage of organised Tory interruption. His best remark—on the relations between the Government and B.O.A.C.—"These things will be settled on the 'old boy' basis. My noble friend and Lord Knollys are not in the habit of putting on their coronets to address one another." Thomas made a brave effort, but should remember that flowery perorations come best spontaneously; and that what titillates the nice senses of a private secretary at 11 o'clock in the morning, may sound plain silly when meticulously read to a ribald House at 11 o'clock at night.

The biggest Parliamentary occasion of the week was Tuesday's debate on Egypt. Churchill succeeded in that most speculative of all manoeuvres—inducing the Speaker to accept a motion for the adjournment of the House on business "of urgent public importance." A most revealing debate followed. The Opposition, freed from the embarrassing entanglements of social legislation, which they mistrust and don't understand, rallied as one man to the call of imperial strategy, which, in Phineas's partisan view, they misunderstand equally. However, a full House enjoyed excellent speeches by Eden and Hogg (Oxford City) and a sumptuous Churchillian *bunne bouche* to top them off. Government supporters, united for the first time over an external issue, fully held their own. Stokes (Ipswich), Crossman (Coventry E.) and Lindsay (English Universities) both just back from Palestine, and Mackay (Kingston-upon-Hull), with an admirable maiden speech, put the case. Morrison, winding up, attempted with dignity and not without success to meet some very telling points from Churchill. Both sides were considerably invigorated by this debate, which may mark the end of Bevin's illicit honeymoon with the Tories. But when all the excitement had died, Phineas could not help realising that Churchill's speech could have been made by any Tory leader from Disraeli onwards. Meanwhile Time, as Morrison pointed out, Marches On. The fact is that in the atomic age it is doubtful whether the Canal could be maintained for a day as a strategic waterway in war; whereas there are no great difficulties in securing it as a commercial artery in peace. In a word, as the Government correctly appreciated, the problem to-day is a political rather than a military one.

PHINEAS TERTIUS

WAR IN PALESTINE?

The publication of the Anglo-American Report on Palestine was followed almost simultaneously by statements from the President and the Prime Minister. Mr. Truman precipitately welcomed the Committee's recommendation that 100,000 certificates should at once be issued, but showed no readiness to offer American assistance in implementing an Anglo-American Report. Mr. Attlee, with reference to the same recommendation, expressed the gravest doubts, stressing that he could only accept it if the illegal armies in Palestine had been disbanded and their arms surrendered prior to the entry of the immigrants. The Prime Minister's words should be studied in full, since their implications are far-reaching.

> It is clear, from the facts presented in the Report regarding the illegal armies maintained in Palestine and their recent activities, that it would not be possible for the Government of Palestine to admit so large a body of immigrants unless and until these formations have been disbanded and their arms surrendered.

It is important to notice, however, that the deduction which Mr. Attlee drew from the facts presented in the Report is in contradiction with the unanimous findings of the Committee. The Committee, as has now been revealed to the press by two American members, Mr. Crum and Mr. Buxton, considered, long and anxiously, the desirability of making the disbandment of illegal armies a precondition of the entry of 100,000. It finally turned the proposal down as not only quite impossible to carry out, but as something which, while designed to minimise the risk of bloodshed, would enormously increase it.

If the policy is adopted, we may well find ourselves drifting involuntarily into an Anglo-Jewish war, as disastrous and as inconclusive as the hostilities in Ireland which preceded the formation of the Irish Free State. In that case a Labour Government, solemnly pledged to right the wrongs of the White Paper, and to support Zionism, will be brought into armed conflict, not merely with the small minority of terrorists, but with the whole Jewish population of the National Home.

What are the illegal armies to which the Prime Minister referred? The Palestinian Arabs are relying on the armed forces of the neighbouring Arab States, and since they won everything they wanted in 1939, they have had no need since then of illegal organisation in Palestine itself. The armies, therefore, which the Prime Minister states must be disbanded before immigration can begin, are exclusively Jewish. In the first place, there are the Stern gang and the Irgun, terrorist groups organised by the Revisionist party and other extreme nationalists, for the purpose of opposing by violence the policy not only of the British administration, but of the Jewish Agency in Palestine. These small groups have been responsible for most of the outrages committed in the last twelve months. There is not even a possibility that they will voluntarily disband themselves or surrender their arms at the request of the Jewish Agency, which they bitterly oppose. It is reasonable to expect the Agency, if the Committee's Report is adopted by the British Government, to assist in hunting these terrorists down, as in fact it did assist in capturing the murderers of Lord Moyne. But it is surely most unreasonable to suggest that the movement of the hundred thousand Jews from Germany and Austria must be held up until this operation is completed.

It is, however, clear that the Prime Minister referred not merely to the Irgun and the Stern gang, but also to the Haganah (or Jewish Home Guard), and that his view is that this too must be disbanded and its arms surrendered before immigration can begin.

To appreciate fully the impact of this demand on the Jews of Palestine, it is necessary to bear in mind the history of the Haganah. It derives from a Jewish defence force established in Turkish times, but it first developed into a real Home Guard during the Arab revolt of 1936-39. The police and the British Army at this period found themselves quite unable to protect the Jews

of the National Home. The Palestine Administration therefore trained and paid a Jewish Settlement Police and established caches of arms in each settlement for use in case of an Arab attack.

During the three years of the Arab revolt, Ben Gurion, who had by then become the leader of the Palestinian Jews, ruthlessly imposed the policy of "self-restraint"; reprisals against the Arabs were punished; shooting was permitted only in self-defence. The Palestine Administration itself admits the admirable behaviour of the Jews during a period when well over a thousand of them were murdered in cold blood. But the Jews took the lesson to heart; they learned that they had to rely in an emergency on their own fighting power. The Haganah became an essential part of the National Home.

Directly following on the Arab revolt came the 1939 White Paper. To the Arabs, who had organised illegal armies, mostly drawn from outside Palestine, it gave everything—including the promised end, after five years, of Jewish immigration. From the Jews, who had rejected violence and co-operated faithfully with the Government, it removed the very basis of their existence. They knew well enough what would happen to them when the promised independence of Palestine became a reality. On that point, the Grand Mufti, in his evidence before the Peel Commission, had left no shadow of doubt.

The White Paper was the turning point in the development of the Haganah. Since 1939, what had been a genuine Home Guard for defence against Arab violence has gradually become a part-time conscript army for the defence of the National Home against the British and the Arabs alike in the event of the White Paper being carried into effect. Quite lately the part-time militia, which includes every Jew, male and female, capable of bearing arms, has been strengthened by a well-organised professional nucleus including full-time staff officers and a first-rate Intelligence service.

The training of this Jewish army for modern warfare has been largely a British responsibility. Some 27,000 Palestinian Jews volunteered for service in the British Army and served overseas. As they returned to Palestine they automatically joined the Haganah. In 1941, when a German invasion of Syria and Egypt seemed imminent, steps were taken by the military authorities to organise and train a Jewish Home Guard in Palestine. The Jews were the only people ready to defend the country, since the Grand Mufti was already in Berlin and the Arabs of Palestine—in the words of Jemal Effendi at a public hearing of the Committee—"had no direct interest in the war." Not content with training the Jewish Home Guard, we also selected a considerable number of young Jews for specialised training in sabotage and guerrilla resistance, in the event of German occupation of the country. I talked to many of them in a detention camp at Latroun.

There remained, however, the problem of immigration. Thousands of Jews, seeking to escape death in Hitler's death-chambers, were barred entry into Palestine. Inevitably illegal immigration was actively supported by every inhabitant of the National Home. How could it be otherwise? How could a Palestinian Jew fail to assist his relations to reach the National Home even if the Mandatory Power said that it was illegal to do so? In organising illegal immigration the Haganah played a leading role throughout the war, and continues to do so to-day.

The end of the war and the election of a Labour Government brought new hope to the Jews in Palestine. They had persuaded themselves that the White Paper was an expedient designed to stave off the danger that the Arabs would go over to the German side at a time when we had no troops to spare for the Middle East. After VE-Day therefore, every Palestinian Jew was completely confident that, now the military danger had been removed and a Labour Government was in power, Britain would once again administer the country according to the Mandate.

No words can express the bitterness of feeling when it was realised that a change of government meant no change of policy. The effect was instantaneous. The moderate elements, led by Dr. Weizmann, had always stood for collaboration with Great Britain and staked their reputations on her readiness to carry out her pledged word. The Revisionists and the other extremists had always preached the insidious doctrine that British strategic interests and oil interests would in the end induce her to betray the National Home, and that, for this reason, the Jews of Palestine must fight their own battle. Within a few weeks of the Labour victory in England, the majority of the Jews had swung away from the moderates. Dr. Weizmann, who remains the one great statesman of Palestine, was left isolated and impotent. Ben Gurion, to maintain his position, began to take a more extreme line, and finally asserted in public that it was now futile for the Jewish Agency to seek to suppress terrorism. The statement was unwise and improper, but it was also a statement of fact. The Palestinian Jews, faced once again with the danger of extermination, were determined to go down fighting.

It is futile at this moment to allocate praise and blame for this desperate situation. It is the facts which matter; and the facts are that the Jews of Palestine, organised in the Haganah, will defend, if necessary by force, the rights granted them under the Mandate and of which they were deprived by the White Paper. Everything I saw for myself in Palestine, and everything which I learned from responsible civil and military authorities, confirms this statement. The attempt to disarm and disband the Haganah at this moment would involve a large-scale military operation, not merely against the small terrorist groups, but against the Jewish population as a whole. "And even then," as one officer said to me, "we shall fail. No one, not even the Germans, has defeated a Maquis when it has the people solid behind it, and justice on its side."

There is only one way of reversing the process: in conformity with the unanimous findings of the Committee, to annul the illegalities and injustices of the White Paper and simultaneously to call on the Jewish Agency to assist in liquidating the extremist groups and to put the Haganah at the disposal of the Palestine Administration, for its proper Home Guard functions. If this were done, and if President Truman would back the demand for the end of private armies, the present explosive situation could be immediately relieved and the danger of an Anglo-Jewish war averted.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

THE DAILY MAIL

THE *Daily Mail*, now celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, has been remarkably consistent in the avowed policy of its founders. This was explained in precise terms by Mr. Kennedy Jones, who from the beginning was associated with Alfred Harmsworth in building up the Northcliffe Press. In *Fleet Street and Downing Street* he reveals that their object was "purely commercial." Money came from selling as many copies as possible, and thereby increasing advertising revenue. This meant that public affairs which, according to the nineteenth-century notion of journalism, were the main business of a newspaper, were only important when they happened to be as popularly interesting as murder or sport. A new type of journalist was required, and Lord Salisbury, who had hitherto thought of newspapers as organs of the Conservative or Liberal Parties, said that the *Daily Mail* was "written by office boys for office boys."

This journalistic revolution—for it was nothing less—had immense results. The credit for it must be given to Lord Northcliffe. Although he had had his predecessors in America, and had learned much in England from George Newnes and W. T. Stead, the effects of his work have been written large over the history of Fleet Street and British democracy during the past generation. Other papers quickly adopted the same principles, and many of those that attempted to maintain the old standards disappeared. The old tradition survived in *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* and some other papers which were content with a comparatively small circulation and a great political influence. Others adopted a compromise. But the biggest fortunes were made out of "purely commercial" papers, which, especially for Sunday reading, achieved astronomical circulations. The press fell largely into the hands of huge Trusts. The great editors of Fleet Street one by one disappeared; the names of the proprietors, who frequently became peers, were household words.

The success of the *Daily Mail* and its imitators and rivals was due to a single-minded pursuit of the largest possible circulation. Lord Northcliffe's genius consisted in knowing that what interested him would interest the mass of the semi-educated public. Britain had compulsory education for the first time in 1870, and in the nineties a new public existed which could read, but had not learned to think; which wanted news, but could not assess its value. To "give the public what it wants," meant to provide that which it would most readily buy if offered. Its long-term wants might be very different; it might complain that it had not been instructed or warned when war or financial crisis shook the world, but the millions who complained would not have read the instruction or heeded the warning. Kennedy Jones describes the psychological experiment that was carried out. The best seller, as the *Daily Mail* discovered in heating up opinion for the Boer War, was war, and crime was second on the list. Northcliffe knew that ordinary people wanted to know a million things about their homes, about everyday life, about new adventures in science and exploration, about motor-cars, about babies and gardens and all the things which the nineteenth-century press was too stodgy and too political to supply. The new press was not primarily an instrument of politics, but a source of miscellaneous, sometimes useful, information, of constant titillation and excitement, of recreation for the tired business man, a way of passing idle moments in the 'bus or Underground.

But, of course, the proprietor, having won his circulation, could not neglect the political opportunities offered him. His own whims, the political opinions of people he knew in the club or who were willing to advertise largely in his papers, became his newspaper's opinions, and they naturally tended to Conservatism. There was no reason for the new press to be consistent. It was a Fleet Street axiom that the public had no memory. Lord Northcliffe's views on Tariff Reform and Free Trade changed overnight as the result of enquiries about opinions expressed in public houses. In 1899, during the Fashoda crisis, the *Daily Mail* declared that "nothing like an *entente cordiale* can subsist between France and her nearest neighbour." France, it said, . . . "will be rolled in the blood and mud in which her press daily wallows."

This line gave way to a violent anti-German campaign during the years before the first world war, though even here there were surprising fluctuations such as occurred when the Kaiser visited England in 1911. On that occasion the *Evening News*, published from Carmelite House, spoke in glowing terms about the Kaiser as "a very gallant gentleman, whose word is better than many another's bond." After the war and the period of "hats off to France," the *Daily Mail* became, of all papers, the most friendly to Hitlerite Germany. For a short period Lord Rothermere even supported Mosley's Blackshirts. Until recently it would have been safe to say, as Mr. A. G. Gardiner said after a study of the *Daily Mail* in a pamphlet published in 1914, that the only thing the *Daily Mail* had consistently advocated was the cultivation of sweet peas.

It is too soon to say what will happen to the *Daily Mail* under the present Lord Rothermere, a man of culture, on whose shoulders a very difficult inheritance has fallen. New tendencies and a new type of writer have made their appearance from time to time in the columns of the

Daily Mail. Indeed, the time has come for a second newspaper revolution, and perhaps Lord Rothermere and some other press barons have realised it. Just as there was a new public educated in elementary schools in the Nineties that was ready to buy news, so to-day there is a new public with a secondary education that has learned to criticise and think in political and social terms. The *News Chronicle* and the new Hulton press are clearly aware of this more educated public. It is because some proprietors were so dismally oblivious of it and so consistently despised the public that they erred so signally in the last election. Even in foreign affairs, where owing to the ignorance of the public, a scare is so much easier than any similar stunt can be in home politics, there is to-day a much larger informed opinion. The circulation of even the least politically intelligent papers continues to increase, because they provide excellent entertainment. Their political influence grows less; public opinion is increasingly moulded by the B.B.C., by periodicals with smaller circulations, by books and pamphlets, by discussion groups and other forms of public education. A race is run between the commercial exploitation of public ignorance and the deliberate self-education of people who have discovered, through two world wars and a great economic slump, that democracy has no meaning unless it is based on knowledge and not on disconnected snippets of information collected for their news value.

A LONDON DIARY

In this journal and elsewhere there have been references to the methods used by the Special Intelligence Branch in securing evidence for the court-martial of the leaders of the "strikes" in the R.A.F. in India. I now have additional and specific evidence about this odd procedure. In one section, all trade unionists were asked to attend an interview and the padre was asked to provide a list of all Communists. The S.I.B. officers said they were acting on instructions from the Foreign Office, compared the demonstrators to Baillie-Stuart, and spent a considerable time going over the past record of the station discussion group, which is not permitted to discuss Service questions. Once a man had been persuaded to admit that he was among the thousands at the meeting, he was threatened with a long term in prison unless he gave additional information. One man was so terrified after an interview that a complaint was made to the Station Welfare Officer and the man was recalled and offered an apology. Another man concerned refused to sign a statement and was kept under guard until he had done so. This may seem legitimate procedure to the S.I.B., but it doesn't seem justifiable to me.

* * *

I suppose only a minute percentage of those present at the Keynes Memorial Service in Westminster Abbey actually accepted in any simple sense the doctrines and beliefs embodied in the words of the hymns and prayers in which they joined. Certainly Keynes, a staunch rationalist, would not have done so. And yet none of us would have been willing to forgo the Service or felt inclined to criticise the words. They were singularly well chosen. They were all familiar. And it was because they were familiar that they meant much, so much more than their superficial content. Rationalism has argued the Church out of existence, yet not dethroned it, mainly, I think, because, although men no longer believe in the Judaic God, whom they evoke, they do demand on the great occasions of life—birth, marriage, death and festival—a ceremony to satisfy their emotions and to celebrate the occasion in community. Tradition cannot be invented, nor can consciously devised ceremonial take the place of words whose associations are so much more important than their surface meanings. Witness the pathetic efforts of positivism to substitute intelligent hero worship for the traditional mythology of Christianity. Take the items at the Keynes Memorial Service. "The King of Love my Shepherd is . . ." What astonishing assumptions that hymn implies and yet imagine trying to write one that would say as much even to people who do not believe in one of them! And the same may be said for the Psalm, "Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle?" for the hymn "O God, our help in ages past," and for the apt and lovely collect, "O God, the physician of men and nations, the restorer of the years that have been destroyed . . ." There are fewer reservations to make about "Let us now praise famous men," about Walford Davies' exquisite anthem, "God be in my head," or about Blake's "Jerusalem." A memorial to Keynes could not end better than with the words "I will not cease from mental fight . . ."

* * *

I have received, too late for publication in this week's issue, a letter from a representative of the Dutch Government categorically denying my suggestion that it is trying to sidestep the Van Mook-Sjahrir basis of negotiation, and also my statements about restrictions on the rights of Indonesian Ministers. I should be glad if I proved wrong about the censorship and lack of freedom accorded to the Indonesian Ministers in Holland, and if, as rumour now has it, the obstructionists are defeated and an Indonesian agreement is actually brought off, that will indeed be the best of good news, on which the British (especially Clark Kerr), the Indonesians and the Dutch Government will all deserve congratulation. But I am still keeping my fingers crossed.

* * *

Invalided out of the Army in 1944 with badly damaged eyesight, E. G. Boulenger, the well-known zoologist and, as such, a frequent contributor to this journal in pre-war days, was an unusual blend of savant and hedonist. Too indolent by nature to have the capacity for the infinite pains which pure Science demands of her devotees, he yet lavished on the London Aquarium care and enthusiasm combined with a rare gift for showmanship. Politically, I suppose, he was a reactionary, in the sense that he would really have liked to live in the Victorian England of *Fanny by Gaslight*; but to the end of his life (he was living quietly in Polperro since leaving the Army) he had an attractive and disarming tolerance of mind and was as much at home in the company of Communists as he was among members of the Wine and Food Society. Few who knew him in recent years, looking like an amiable and rather portly retired pirate, complete with patch over one eye, were probably aware that in World War I he served in the Suicide Squad of Balloon Observers. It may be that that experience helped him to retain his unfailing zest for life.

* * *

Jeremy is a marmalade cat, about seven months old. He escaped the other day from his home not far from Charing Cross. We were out and did not discover our loss until eleven o'clock at night. First I sought him in the Embankment Gardens, feeling somewhat foolish as I called in the dark, disturbing the privacy and comfort of courting couples. Then I recalled that Jeremy is a very companionable beast who likes people rather than scenery. The pubs, of course, were shut and London seemed very large and ill-sign-posted for erring cats. First I tried Charing Cross Underground without success. Wandering disconsolately up Villiers Street I next called at the Players Theatre on the off-chance. Yes, they had all seen Jeremy. He'd been there, making friends with everyone. Unfortunately he had refused to stay and had left no address. Hot on the trail, I tried the next inhabited place, Charing Cross Station. "Oh, yes," said the ticket collector at the first platform, "your cat was here ten minutes ago. Can't say which way he went." The Charing Cross Hotel? Yes, they'd seen him half an hour since. Lyons Corner House, however, had not. Charing Cross Station remained the best bet. The police constable on duty for the night was most friendly and sympathetic. He introduced me to the station cat and told me the history of her last kittens. We explored the deserted platforms, especially one where a cargo of fish had left an appetising smell. We even searched the ladies' lavatory, my first, and probably last, time to enter that mysterious territory. Finally, with the station shutting at one o'clock, we instructed the remaining porters to keep a look-out. I left my telephone number, and went home to bed. Sure enough at a little before six in the morning the telephone hooked me from my bed like a minnow; the police had my cat. Half an hour later we celebrated Jeremy's home coming in an early morning cup of tea.

* * *

Such an incident has a peculiar spice in London, because one discovers that its vast impersonal hullabaloo is after all only a disguise for a collection of human beings each living in his own village, which has somehow got jammed up against a lot of other villages. Charing Cross will never again seem to me a strange or menacing place or a mere port of call from which one wants to get away as soon as possible. I am on close personal terms with the presiding constable and the official cat. Obviously, if one had the time and patience, one could spend every night as advantageously as Haroun Al-Raschid. No end to surprise, if one is not in a hurry, not bent on one's private concerns. For instance, when I told the story of Jeremy at lunch the other day it was capped by a distinguished scientist. In company with a well-known medical specialist not long ago, he was hoping to catch a bus or find a late taxi in a deserted street. Suddenly a clink of falling coins sounded on the side-walk near them. No one was in sight. They searched, and to their astonishment, found 16*s*. 6*d*. My friend was for regarding the find as treasure trove, but the medical knight was more scrupulous and created a stir in an adjacent pub by calling for silence and asking if anyone had discarded 16*s*. 6*d*. Surprisingly, no one put in a claim. My friend and his companion were moving off down the road when a quite attractive, if rather overdressed, young woman (I quote my friend's description) emerged from further down the side-street and asked if anyone had by any chance found any money. Explanation given: "My-er-husband threw it away . . . you see we had words just as we were going in . . ." (The husband, my friend remarks, must have been a powerful thrower.) Clearly much remained unsaid and how much remained for the imagination to play upon!

CRITIC

MR. TRUMAN'S SECRET

The secret never yielded
To friendly Allied Powers
Could not be better shielded
Supposing it were ours;
So mere atomic chatter
Becomes a hanging matter
Not lawful to discuss,
Though Mr. Truman's secret
Has not been shared by us.

No leakage is acquitted,
The careless stand their trial,
Though we are not admitted
To Mr. Truman's pile.
With Truman in alliance
To seal the lips of science
We speak with bated breath,
For Mr. Truman's secret
Means mankind's life or death.

The secret superhuman
Entrusted to his hands
Not even Mr. Truman
Completely understands.
But prompt incarceration
Attends its revelation,
(Although it is not known).
We're keeping Truman's secret
As if it were our own.

SAGITTARIUS

EDUCATION IN GERMANY

I HAVE spent two months investigating the renascence of German education in the three Western Zones; and though I still await permission to enter the Russian Zone, two weeks in Berlin have at least supplied some first-hand information on the extraordinarily interesting and far-reaching plans maturing there. They can be summed up in the word *Einheitsschule*, and what they amount to is free schooling for all children between the ages of six and fourteen, preceded by one year of obligatory nursery-schooling and followed by two years of vocational training or four years of secondary schooling for those who make themselves eligible for a University education. Standards for this are extremely high; it is expected that out of a hundred children entering the nursery stage of the *Einheitsschule* only five will make the grade. But, apart from ensuring a real élite getting to the top, these numbers will be as large as the nation can absorb in the professions and in the higher Civil Service.

The plans for the *Einheitsschule* have been worked out by German teachers, with encouragement and support from the Russian authorities, and the system will be built up from the nursery class and First Form this September, so that in eight years the transition will be completed. In the meantime the curricula of the higher Forms are to be adjusted to the new system as much as possible. The standard of the new *Einheitsschule* is considerably higher than that of any elementary School. At least one foreign language (Russian compulsory in the Russian Zone) will be taught, and in the top two Forms a second foreign language and/or the elementary stage of higher mathematics. Considerable attention is devoted to encouraging special talents and interests at the expense of less congenial subjects, and an attractive feature of the scheme is an ingeniously worked out system whereby the pupil is given repeated opportunities of adjusting his curriculum according to his gifts or limitations. Due care is also taken of the fact that some of the most gifted children are slow to develop or to discover their special faculties. Those few who make the grade into the four years of Secondary Education will also have opportunities to choose between the two main "forks"—one with the emphasis on Latin, Greek, History, Philosophy and Literature; the other specialising in Modern Languages, Mathematics, Natural Science, and Economics. As to the majority, ineligible for that kind of education, their two years of vocational training will include a good deal of general schooling, supplementing the curriculum of the basic eight *Einheitsschule* years.

Considering the vicious circle of political animosity between the Zones, it is significant that almost all the leading German educationists in the Western Zones (many of them members of the Social-Democratic Party) have nothing but praise for the "Russian" *Einheitsschule*, and indeed aspire to very much the same system, though they consider it necessary to go about it by evolutionary rather than revolutionary means. "We can't ram it down their throats as easily as all that," was in effect the comment of Adolf Grimme, Minister of Education in the 1932 Prussian Government, then in and out of gaols and concentration camps for well over ten years, and now one of the key men for Education in the British Zone. While still humouring tradition and prejudice by maintaining three different types of school, Grimme's plan does agree with the "Russian" in that, by a similar system of "choices," any pupil in any type of school has a legitimate chance of reaching Secondary schooling and a University education.

What Grimme meant when hinting at "difficulties" in too radical reforms, I could appreciate when, at a Zonal Educational Congress, I heard him say:

> When I hear you, gentlemen, argue whether or not Latin is to start in this form or that, I wonder if you realise that a world has gone to pieces and a new one has got to be built up; and I can't help thinking that your minds are still way back in 1890 when the Kaiser put in an appearance at the first *Reichs-Schultagung*, dressing down your fathers: "If you fellows had always done your duty, all of you, there would be no Social-Democrats now." Allow me, ladies and gentlemen, to vary these words: If you had always done your duty, all of you, there would have been no Hitler.

Yet there are many admirable types among German educationists in the West. There is that man in Hanover who, being a renowned teacher and with a perfect record of victimisation during the régime, could have had any job he wanted; but he asked for the thankless and gruelling task of looking after the moral and physical welfare of "displaced" and wayward Youth. There are many others, men and women, who work sixteen hours a day (looking more emaciated each week), trying desperately to launch their ship in a sea of apathy, ignorance and ill will. They are co-operating with some no less zealous and inspired officers of the Military Government and Control Commission.

In the British Zone, the Headquarters of the Education Branch at Bünde is full of such people. Walking the sleepy streets of that small Westphalian town, once famed for the manufacture of cheap cigars, looking at the faces and listening to the accents of the passers-by, one might imagine one was in Oxford or Cambridge. Here you find many highly qualified English men and women, prepared to devote years away from home to what they sincerely (and rightly) consider a vitally important cause. In helping the Germans to grapple with such problems as the new text-books and Teacher-Training Colleges, they are doing useful spade-work and are imparting valuable knowledge about the administrative experiences of local government in Britain. They have been doing some pioneer work, too, particularly in the field of school-broadcasts—a new idea in Germany. Some of the German teachers took up this notion with enthusiasm; schools were fitted with receiving sets confiscated from Nazis; and within a few months *Schulfunk* was a Zone-wide organisation which now reaches beyond the British Zone.

Films, too, are being widely used as an educational medium; and, unlike broadcasts, this was found to be a going concern. Out of some 900 (16 mm.) films found in the meticulously organised school-film archives, more than 800 turned out to be suitable with very minor cuts, if any; this was due to the fact that only relatively few subjects lent themselves to being "ideologically" tainted by the regime. This educational medium is being looked after chiefly by the Americans (though it is used in the other Zones too); and, while the U.S.A. educational authorities have nothing quite comparable with the concerted effort at Bünde, they too, with repeated inter-Zonal conferences and good co-operation with leading German educationists (outstanding among them Senator Paulmann in Bremen), are making some progress on similar lines. The French, in their turn, had the good sense to invite Alfred Döblin, a great German writer, from his U.S.A. exile; and another important personality at Baden-Baden is General Schmittlein, the French Chief of Education, who has not merely a spectacular career in the Maquis to his credit but some pretty sound ideas. He told me that, since every nation (and particularly the German) needs a certain amount of hero-worship, one could not deprive them of their Knights-Cross wearers without substituting something they can be really proud of—the memory of the really progressive epochs in German history and the men who fought and suffered for liberty, even though they failed.

At any rate, a big centenary celebration of the 1848 Revolution is being prepared, and it is to be hoped that this will be more than a Zonal affair.

By 1948, the children of this first year of peace will be two years older and perhaps a little less of a problem. To-day German education is still in a transitionary stage. It is a truism by now to say that no specific German problem (and certainly not Education) can be thought of without first thinking of food. But it is less widely appreciated that housing is almost as grim a problem, and that, with hardly any German having more than one room to share with somebody, there is practically no privacy at all. I asked every German educationist I met which was the most pressing of their three main technical problems. Without exception they gave the shortage of school-rooms priority over the deficiency of text-books and the lack of reliable teachers, grave though these other two problems are. For some time to come the present methods of makeshift school-rooms and staggered lessons all through the day will have to be used. In some big cities, such as Hamburg, Military Government provides lorries to take children to schools available in other districts. However, with few exceptions, such as Berlin, where in March 10,000 children (2½ per cent.) were still unaccounted for, the first problem has been solved. The children are going to school again.

HEINRICH FRAENKEL

(To be continued)

UNITY OF THE LEFT

[This article is a reply to "The Case against Affiliation" published in our last issue.]

SUCH a whirl of angry invective is apt to be imported into any discussion of the Communists' role in the British Labour Movement that Socialists of all shades of opinion will be grateful for the reasoned statement of the Labour Party's case against affiliation which "Fabius" contributed to last week's issue of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. He has since gained a potent ally in Professor H. J. Laski, whose pamphlet*, if somewhat more polemically partisan, is at least an essay in criticism addressed to the politically adult. Were one in search of debating points, it might be objected that both Fabius and Laski are not above reliance on the question-begging phrase. For Fabius, the society which the Labour Party aims at preserving and improving is a "liberal culture" which the suggestible reader is tacitly invited to contrast with dictatorial tyranny. Such culture, Laski says, must not be "thrown away in the name of a theory" whose practitioners suffer from a "corruption both of the mind and of the heart." But, setting aside their occasional indulgences in such expressions of bias, both these exponents of Social-Democratic political philosophy merit thanks for elevating the issue above the lobbying and the personal rancours which are likely to determine the voting at the Whitsuntide Conference. The case, as they put it—and their respective lines of reasoning are similar—is tantamount to an assertion that, at any rate outside the Soviet Union, Social-Democracy (which, they agree, is the fundamental basis of the Labour Party's thinking) should have a monopoly in the working-class movement. With no other brand of Socialism can there be a coalition or even a working arangement.

This thesis, as Fabius and Laski expound it, rests substantially on two propositions. The first is that the Communist Party is essentially alien from, and antagonistic to, both democratic tradition and British interests because (a) it regards as inevitable a Third World War between the Western Democracies and the U.S.S.R., to the strengthening of whose resources for that conflict it is ready to sacrifice every other consideration; and (b) because it insists rigidly on following the pattern of October, 1917, as the only means to the attainment of working-class power. Hence, if it professes readiness to co-operate with other working-class parties, it does so only with the secret intention of stabbing them in the back, when increasing misery, at which Communists aim, has reached the catastrophic point of "ripeness" for revolution.

To the first proposition the short answer is that the alleged Communist belief in the inevitability of this Third World War is not substantiated by either Fabius or Laski. Some Communists may

* *The Secret Battalion. Labour Publication Department. Transport House.*

be pessimists in this respect; so are not a few members of the Labour Party. But even if the Communist Party as a whole were convinced that the nationalistic antagonism of the capitalist democracies to the Soviet Union must sooner or later lead to the Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff exploiting their monopoly of the atomic bomb, is that a reason for the Party's exclusion from a Labour Movement whose aim, both Fabius and Laski stress, is to preserve friendly relations with Russia?

To prove the "stab in the back" theory, Laski invokes a recent speech delivered in Sofia by Dimitrov. Unfortunately for his case, he misquotes and misinterprets it. According to Laski, Dimitrov argues that the Communist Party must disguise itself as "an ordinary democratic party" in order to enter a coalition with Social-Democracy as the Trojan horse entered Troy. Actually, Dimitrov was rebuking the ultra-Left in Bulgaria for complaining that the Communists had become an "ordinary democratic party," because, in common with Socialists, Agrarians and others, they had entered the Coalition of the Fatherland Front. He went on to say that the struggle for Socialism was now essentially different from what it was in 1917. That it was now a question, not of "hit right and left and set up your dictatorships," but of "the co-operation of the working class with the peasants, craftsmen, intelligentsia and the progressive strata of the people."

> When one day the question of a transition of the people from the present social organisation to a new Socialist order arises . . . it will be the historic work of the entire people . . . We chose this very course of entry into the Coalition because it is a realistic and painless road to Socialism . . . The crux of the matter, and we Marxists should know this well, is this: every nation will effect its transition to Socialism, not by a mapped-out route, not exactly as in the Soviet Union, but by its own road, dependent on its historical, national, social, and cultural circumstances.

There is precious little evidence here in support of the thesis that Communism seeks to collaborate with Social-Democracy only to discredit it, or that it insists on 1917-model revolution for revolution's sake.

We may now turn to the second, and in a sense complementary, proposition. This is that, whatever arguments there might have been in favour of a working-class coalition of forces designed to win political power, that need has now lapsed, at any rate in Britain. Here the political victory has been won; Social-Democracy has had, in the advent of the Labour Government to Westminster, its flower and fruit. The inclusion of Communists—a disruptive element—in an otherwise "solid" Labour Party must at best impede it in carrying out its programme, and, at worst, would represent the entry of a Fifth Column into the working-class camp. Social-Democracy is quite capable of achieving Socialism on its own.

Neither Fabius nor Laski gives one the impression of believing wholeheartedly in this confident assertion. Fabius admits the existence of "weak spots" in the Labour Government, and protests that it must not be "immune from criticism within." (Indeed, he approves of the idea that individual Communists should join the Labour Party and contribute their "faith and devotion" to the framing of its policy.) Laski, too, is obviously conscious that the social reforms and the programme of nationalisation on which the Labour Party is embarked have not yet met with the real counter-blow of reaction. In fact, he reminds his readers that, so far, "Labour has only occupied the outer defence works of the capitalist system," and that "the peaceful abdication of a class from that hold on the State-power by which it maintains its privileges is one of the rarest phenomena of history." What he deprecates is provocation of the dangers against which he warns Labour to be vigilant. The voice of Continental Social-Democracy, fearful of provoking the aggression of Fascism, echoes down the years.

Let us assume, however, the ability of Social-Democracy, unaided and acting on its own principles, to create the Socialist Commonwealth. If, as Laski argues, there is no danger of a repetition of the betrayal of 1931, and no real reason to disbelieve in the willingness of the capitalist class to be persuaded out of existence, why should a coalition with Communists be an embarrassment to the Labour Party? Because, says Fabius, it could not help opposing the Government in its efforts to create (for what purpose, if not as a weapon against the U.S.S.R.?) a Western Bloc of united Social-Democrats. Because, hints Laski, it might be a nuisance in protecting "our" vital interests in the Middle East, where fortunately the Arab States (unless supported by Russia) have "neither the material nor the economic resources" to stand up against British tanks.

If, in fact, the British Labour Party were content simply to create, and call Socialist, a State in which the lives and conditions of the working class were determined by a network of Public Boards, staffed mainly by men steeped in the ways of the Old Order, and in which the rentier, ousted from nationalised industry, enjoyed in perpetuity the undiminished usufruct of the Government's compensation bonds, then it would run into (and merit) opposition, not only from Communists without, but from every real Socialist within its ranks. And if the defence of "liberal culture" were in fact to be little more than a cover for continuity of Conservative policy in the Mediterranean and the Far East, and for the preservation of a society in which still dominant capitalist interests were bound to render Britain the enemy of a Socialist Europe and the dependent ally of Capitalist America, then Fabius and Laski would be right. There would be no room in such a Labour Party for Communists.

Both Fabius and Laski, however, would emphatically reject these assumptions. On Laski's showing, the Labour Party should accept a large part of the Marxist analysis of society; but he claims that, in Britain, there is at least the possibility of carrying through the revolution by consent. Though traditionally and, in the light of experience, justifiably sceptical of this sanguine view, the Communists (*teste* Dimitrov) are to-day willing to give this policy of "painless" transition every chance. They are only too conscious that a divided Left—which must result from fratricidal war between Social-Democracy and Communism—is the opportunity which reactionaries here and on the Continent seek for their comeback. Affiliation in this country is sought by the Communist Party in order to reinforce the progressive elements in the Labour Party in the campaign for a genuinely Socialist policy both at home and abroad. Opposition to affiliation from non-Socialists is intelligible; but those are not the premises from which Fabius and Laski fight their case.

SPARTACUS

NOTES FROM HUNGARY

After crossing the Austro-Hungarian frontier by road in mid-February, the first town where we stopped was Győr. In a modest restaurant, light wine was offered to us, and dishes of fresh eggs and *tyúkleves à la Ujházy*—a gorgeous Hungarian soup, with a whole fowl boiled in it, which I had not seen for seven years. I forget whether 120,000 or 250,000 pengö was nominally charged for the *tyúkleves*. The inn-keeper counted in Black Exchange dollars; at this rate, we paid about 10 cents for the dish. Coming from abroad, we could afford it; but we asked in vain for bread. This had just run out in the whole district. The bread I later saw in Budapest (except for some "grey market" loaves) looked and tasted like mud. Odd contrasts typify Hungary to-day. In a hastily restored first-class hotel, amongst apparent signs of luxury, it is almost hopeless to get a hot bath; fashionable perfumes are available, but soap is very scarce, and bad. As for the discrepancy between prices and incomes, at the Black Exchange dollar rate, a Cabinet Minister's salary amounts to some $6 a month; that of a clerk to about $1.75.

Nothing heard in Britain about Nazi cruelty was exaggerated. Atrocity propaganda lagged behind reality in this war. One hears in Budapest stories of murder, torture and humiliation inflicted with methods which one would have found incredible even after having seen the photographs of Belsen. The "Greenshirts," the Hungarian Arrowcross Fascists, and the "Cockfeathers," the regular Hungarian gendarmerie of the provinces, as well as the German Gestapo and the S.S. (the latter was recruited largely from the "Swabian" minority in Hungary) invented new methods of torture day by day. The behaviour of the regular German Army was "correct"; it consisted of "maintaining order," so that the dirty work could be done by others without a hindrance, and of dismantling Hungarian factories and deporting Hungarian goods in a quantity which is assessed at 20-30 per cent. of Hungary's national wealth.

* * *

Not even the adherents of the present Hungarian regime give it sufficient credit for having done away with the gendarmerie, a sadistic institution which had for more than half a century been the main pillar of "law and order" in Hungary. The fact that the country could dispense with it without falling a prey to anarchy should not be overshadowed by the other remarkable achievements of the new Hungary—the first really democratic elections in Hungarian history, the carrying out of long overdue land reform, the incorporation of the workers' trade unions in national life and the building of the first permanent bridge over the Danube—the Kossuth bridge in Budapest—since the destruction of bridges by the Nazis. Simultaneously with the dissolution of the gendarmerie in the provinces, the police force in Budapest and other cities was purged. Many complaints have been heard from "moderate" and reactionary quarters about its new recruits. But police measures against those suspected of Fascist or treacherous activities have been negligible compared with the deeds committed by Fascists or traitors. In a country where hundreds of thousands had been sent to the gas chambers from the Fascist concentration camps, or tortured to death on the spot, not more than 15,400 persons were interned at the beginning of September last year; and afterwards, when the Communists took over the Ministry of the Interior, 3,600 of them were released by February. There is a difference, however, between the yardsticks of the police, in which Left influence is strong, and the People's Courts, the majority of whose members consist of "moderates." The sentences which the latter passed on war criminals were very lenient, even by British standards.

* * *

The present rulers of Hungary have succeeded, as far as possible, in combining the features of democracy required by Western as well as by Soviet opinion. Constitution and Parliamentary life have been built up on the Western pattern; in foreign policy and foreign trade the Soviet Union is considered the first, though not the only, Power to rely upon; and, in the economic sphere, Hungarians aim at that combination of collectivism and individualism which, since the end of the war, has become, in varying ratios, the leading idea all over Europe from London to Belgrade. In the middle of such international tension as existed, for instance, at the time of the Bevin-Vishinsky exchanges in the Security Council, this balance of sympathies could only be maintained through the unanimity in fundamentals amongst the governing parties—Smallholders, Communists, Social-Democrats, and National Peasants. There are differences between these parties, and even within them, but the Smallholders accepted the necessity of Soviet orientation as naturally as the Communists and National Peasants agreed to the importance of developing links with the West; for the Social-Democrats who, while closely co-operating with

the Communists, were anxious to maintain the individuality of their own movement, it was easy to agree to both. Most, though not all, of the small opposition groups—Catholic Democrats, Liberal Democrats, Radicals—also endorsed these efforts. There are, however, many undeclared reactionaries who have used the expression of sympathies for the U.S. and Britain as a screen for agitation against Russia and even for attempts to rehabilitate the Horthy regime which fought the U.S. and Britain. Unfortunately, such elements are able sometimes to suggest that they have "connections with the West"; and, as a result, the workers get irritable and suspicious whenever such connections are mentioned. The masses of Social-Democratic workers and progressives of all parties and classes have a great esteem for Labour Britain, a friendliness which does not imply hostility to anything else except Fascism and its collaborators. They would be only too glad to get encouragement from London, but not if they are expected to share it with those who accepted encouragement from Berlin and Rome some years ago.

* * *

I have been trying to make a study of what people here know of Britain and what they do not. It is impossible to find a coherent pattern. English-speaking intellectuals discuss recent books by Professor Carr or G. D. H. Cole with an astonishing familiarity. Large numbers have listened to the B.B.C. ever since it started broadcasting in Hungarian. Nevertheless, people are amazed to learn that there is still rationing in Britain—though this is a recurring theme in B.B.C. broadcasts. I found Hungarians enthusiastic about Britain's lonely stand after Dunkirk, impressed by the R.A.F., intrigued by Radar and puzzled how the Western Allies had landed in France. I mentioned "Mulberry," in reply; of this, out of ten Hungarians not more than one had heard, and he only vaguely. Yet the B.B.C. put the Mulberry story out several times. What stuck in people's minds most deeply was V1 and V2. Everybody asked me what these had looked like, and expressed not only admiration, but also a comradely sympathy for the British for their ordeal under the "curtain of fire" which had then covered their isles. German propaganda in this case produced results it did not foresee.

PAUL IGNOTUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Maurice Leyden.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Eton Council's first refuse van is to be painted Prussian blue, although women councillors urged a brilliant red "to give a bit of colour to the town." But red was ruled out "because of its political implications."—*Evening News.*

The Freedom of Bury.—Bury General Purposes Committee have set up a special sub-committee to make ceremonial arrangements for granting the freedom of the borough to the Lancashire Fusiliers on August 3. Other corporation committees will "entertain" the soldiers by offering for three days free plunge and slipper baths, free travel on the buses and trams, an art gallery lecture on the town's history, and a visit to the town's sewage works.—*Manchester Evening News.*

Lady would like companionship of educated Gentleman, approx. 50, rugged grandeur type, genuine.—Advt. in *Belfast Telegraph.*

The Palmers had set their hearts on breeding a red, white and blue mouse in time for the Victory Parade. They have produced red mice, blue mice, and, of course, there has never been any difficulty about white mice.—Report in *Evening News.*

THE ROYAL ACADEMY

IT is commonly assumed that the reviewer is paid to pick holes and burst bubbles, and within the laws of libel to be as disagreeable as possible about whatever he criticises; but all critics know how boring and easy the practice of denunciation becomes, and learn to fish about in the dustbin of mediocrity for unsuspected merit. The visit to Burlington House should be undertaken in the same spirit as a visit to the antique shop of a provincial town, where behind the layers of dust and bric-à-brac, we are convinced there lurks some hidden treasure to be carried away in triumph. At first the experience seems forbidding enough. Here is room after room of Impressionist landscapes that would make Sisley blush with shame; still-lifes that Duncan Grant was painting more skilfully in 1922; interiors that plaintively echo Bonnard of the Nineties; and portraits of eminent public figures and prosperous ladies in the debased currency of 1760. The definition of academic painting should be the style of the best work of a generation back, but our best painters of the older generation are not represented. Artists like Duncan Grant, Matthew Smith and Paul Nash have been by-passed, and since their style has only recently become respectable in academic circles, we have to put up with a riot of inferior imitators. No one would blame the Academy if it were truly academic; but its members have insufficient knowledge of the Old Masters, or at any rate have failed to apply the lesson of the Old Masters, which is that art is based on sensation and vision, and needs constant renewal and revitalisation. Most of the exhibitors paint neither what they see nor what they feel: instead, they adopt a formal convention, derived from English portraits of the eighteenth century or French Impressionism or any other style that happens to be fashionable, like the writer of a leading article who uses words, not to express meaning but to soothe the reader with outworn and incomprehensible pious sentiments.

However, these are transitory impressions, which disappear on the discovery of a few good pictures. The persevering visitor will pick out a handful of excellent portraits, scattered here and there through the galleries, in which, surprisingly, the artist has made an honest effort to express what he has seen and felt. These are all signed with the name of Rodrigo Moynihan. They are not dramatic or clever but unassuming, low in key and sensitive in handling. We look to him and to other young men like Coldstream and Gowing (not represented here) to revive this art of portrait-painting which has lain moribund since the death of Sir Thomas Lawrence. There is also a lovely still-life by Moynihan (No. 38) in which a transparent decanter almost merges into the background, and his "Model resting" is the most vigorous of all his exhibited works. Of the other portraits in the exhibition, Henry Lamb's are among the most attractive; but he seems to have learnt a recipe for portrait-painting after many years of experience and to have become too fluent and repetitive. Two portraits by a less well-known artist, Fleetwood-Walker, deserve to be noticed: one with the embarrassing title of "Auntie" is a good psychological study of an elderly spinster; the other, entitled "Alice," of a girl, is bold in design and colour and more personal in feeling than its neighbours. The general level of quality at this exhibition is so low that the visitor pauses with delight in front of a large portrait-group of people playing cards, by Millais, recently purchased by the Royal Academy—not Millais in the lyrical mood of his pre-Raphaelite boyhood but all too grown up and heading straight for an unworthy popularity—nevertheless the picture represents solid achievement and professionalism, alongside which the Impressionist landscapes seem shoddy and the portraits empty and dull.

The portraits and still-lifes of Edward Le Bas evoke nostalgic memories of sunlight playing over chequered table-cloths and leisure and good food; they are traditional but in the best tradition of French painting. Anthony Devas tries his hand at the lost art of the conversation-piece in "Mrs. Edward Tennant and her children." A persistent demand for this type of painting exists but no supply. In the slow-moving world of Devas and Marcellus Laroon, people could be made to stay put; but in these days of ceaseless travel it is not easy to get a family together in the same room for long periods at a time. Of the landscape painters, Ruskin Spear stands out as the most promising. He has profited from the recent work of Pasmore, and seems about to develop a personal language of form.

Burlington House is worth a visit for these few moments of pleasure. But what of the hundreds of other pictures that line the walls? They will hang for a few years above a mantelpiece, then be relegated to an attic and replaced by a watered-down version of the art of 1946. A few words must be said about two that have aroused comment and interest. Richard Eurich in his "Royal visit to Eton" has set himself an impossible artistic problem, by reproducing in detail the setting of College Chapel and Lupton's Tower, but at the same time trying to individualise the tiny figures on the Chapel steps. An artist like Wilkie, who often painted similar scenes, would have realised that the figures could only stand out if the background was treated more summarily. Dame Laura Knight's impression of the Nüremberg trial was a heaven-sent opportunity but the picture fails because she has imposed her own personal view of Nazi atrocities in an allegorical background of destruction. If the subject had been treated naturalistically, it might have been worthy of preservation in some future International History Museum, as a documentary record.

HENRY CRABEE

NOTE ON STRATFORD

IT is difficult to be critical at Stratford, particularly in fine weather. The Midland spring is late and leisurely and full. At Stratford the floral set-up is still not much more than dandelion and daisy; the chervil is still unwreathing itself and the only early summer things I saw were a peculiar kind of wintercress sticking up boldly within four feet of the Memorial Theatre, and a Wall Butterfly on the sunny side of the path which leads from Anne Hathaway's cottage to the Avon. But the famous Stratford wisteria is out and the fruit blossom is still dazzling. Visitors are pleasurably bemused, also, by the cunning of museum guides who can make First Folios and the more irrelevant rubbish peculiar to major birthplaces seem equally precious. (It is only afterwards that one wonders whether interest in Shakespeare really extends to the old reindeer tooth uncovered when they were digging out the waterworks.)

Most of all, visitors are bemused in the theatre, which is so quiet, so perfectly placed, on the river, and so soft-seated and, of course, so beautifully functional—even if the nature of its function was never quite precisely enough defined. Some misunderstanding over sight lines, and hearing lines, forces the performers to declaim their words at us across a no-man's land of empty fore-stage, so that actors and audience seem to be staring at each other rather pathetically through the wrong end of a pair of opera glasses.

The choice of plays this year steers a nice course between chestnut and oddity. A competent cast is headed by Valerie Taylor, with Mr. Harris and Mr. King-Wood, both of whom are natural-born speakers of verse. Sets are well devised to match the quite sumptuous costumes, many of which are taken from the Memorial Theatre's bountiful pre-war wardrobe.

There is no traditional method of producing Shakespeare at Stratford and Sir Barry Jackson keeps faith with this good habit of freedom by choosing a different producer for each play.

Love's Labour's Lost.—Mr. Peter Brook is very young and very intelligent. Taking hold of this opportunity with both hands, he has very naturally produced the play to pieces. The fascination and poetry in this comedy can easily be buried if there are too many novelties. Too much is made of the various dressing-up episodes. Violent business does not make incomprehensible lines less boring. Above all, Mr. Brook should never have been allowed to play pantomime by dressing up Constable Dull to look like the funny policeman in *Old Mother Hubbard*, or by allowing his comics to make whims

exits through the mouth of a telescope, or by allowing Costard to benumb us with modernisations of the text, altering "he is o'erparted" into "the part isn't right for him," and so on. The study of *Love's Labour's Lost* brings this reward: that it helps us to see, budding beneath the damnable tortuosity of the cross-talk, the first fine gentle shoots of the true Shakespeare. If he had approached the play differently, Mr. Brook, who devises his curtains, his exits and his entrances like a master, could have fixed our attention not on the clowns but on the poetry of Berowne, and the magic of "When icicles hang by the wall."

By contrast, Mr. Nugent Monck's production, which leaves *Cymbeline* very much to its own devices, is on the whole to be preferred. Not only the play but the actors stand out more clearly. Paul Scofield, obviously a Shakespearian actor in the making, plays Cloten with engaging ill-humour. It would take an Imogen to resist the wooing of David King-Wood's Iachimo, which has all the grace and fascination, if not quite the cutting edge, necessary for the part. There are two interesting faults of this under-production. Where Leonatus preposterously accepts Iachimo's challenge (involving the honour of Imogen), the scene loses half its effect if it is played as a front scene, and half its credibility unless, in accordance with tradition, the gentlemen are feasting themselves, and appear somewhat in liquor. Again, in the last act, no attempt should be made to give equal value to each of the half-dozen plots and sub-plots all being unwound at once. The one flesh-and-blood character is Imogen (Valerie Taylor is made for the part): and our eyes are on her, and her alone, while we wait for her to see the bracelet on Iachimo's arm. But she is never allowed to catch sight of the bracelet at all, and we can only see Imogen herself by craning our eyes round Belisarius's beard. Mr. Wolfit's sense of the theatre is almost too strongly developed, but in his recent production he made these points most accurately.

In *The Tempest*, Mr. Robert Harris's Prospero has resonance and an outer dignity, but not the inward calm which justifies those who like to see in this character something more than an eloquent but sometimes ill-tempered old dealer in white magic. The recorded music, boldly undertaken by Lennox Berkeley under the shadow of the existence of the most beautiful incidental music in the world—Sibelius' Tempest music—is most effective and beautifully underlines the latent mysteries and suggests the strange noises and airs and the movements and shapes of sound which make up Caliban's island. But it was wrong of the relay system not to allow us to hear the words of "Come unto these yellow sands."

STEPHEN POTTER

THE MOVIES

"Le Jour Se Lève," at Studio One
"Les Bas Fonds," at Baker Street Classic
"Le Bonheur," and "Christmas Holiday," at Carlton, Tottenham Court Road

Cinema-going at the moment has come to resemble the round of concerts in which one experiences the same pieces again and again. With no new film worth seeing and revivals in plenty, I have chosen three French films—two of them familiar—to dwell on. No one who has seen *Le Jour Se Lève* once, or twice as I had, could resist going again; for here we have, indeed, as brilliant and well-made a film as any during the last ten years. It wears, I think, even better than the same director's *Quai des Brumes*, which is saying a good deal. Marcel Carné has to some extent taken Clair's place as a master of screen idiom, though his scope is narrower. How much feeling he manages to insinuate into these squalid, atmospheric pieces! Every detail of *Le Jour Se Lève* is relevant, and in one way or another invested with beauty, from the tall wedge-like building in which murder is committed down to the ornaments along the mantelpiece, each of which carries memories. The thematic use of detail—note the reappearances of that last packet of cigarettes!—is very much in the line of *Sous les Toits de Paris*, as is also the photography of bedroom, *café chantant*, and street. Carné has a strain of lyricism, which brings out the pattern of bullet-holes as well as a love-story, but essentially his gift is dramatic. The two tenses of *Le Jour Se Lève*—the present inexorably working itself up from murder to the climax of suicide, the past introducing a second but no less dramatic tempo—are brilliantly intermingled. This employment of the throwback, often so tedious a device, is in fact unrivalled: Simenon has tried it in writing, with less success. A final point which I was able to appreciate at a third visit was the contributory excellence of Maurice Jaubert's score, a model of its kind. But, of course, the important thing is that *Le Jour Se Lève* moves us not less but more when we get to know it; and that can be said of only a handful of films. As for acting—Jules Berry gives here a performance that sweeps all the Oscars of the last ten years into the dustbin.

Like every Renoir film *Les Bas Fonds* has veins of fantasy and a true pity for human nature. It is however, a long way from its original, and can't compare with what the Russians themselves have made of Gorky. *Le Bonheur*, written by Sidney Bernstein and directed by Marcel L'Herbier, was the only one of these films new to me. Boyer, looking more romantic than he does to-day and acting better, and Michel Simon add distinction to a successfully stagy tale of a cartoonist who tries to shoot a film actress in public. He has two explanations of this onslaught, one (political) for the court and the other (sentimental) for the lady herself who, being recovered, falls in love with him. Neither quite convinces though, as a skilled dramatist, M. Bernstein, makes them equally plausible. There is a good deal more fun and subtlety in *Le Bonheur* than an outline of its plot might suggest. If you haven't come across it before, it is worth a visit; and in the same programme Somerset Maugham's *Christmas Holiday* returns—a taut, realistic little piece.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Our Town," at the New Theatre
"The Shepherd and the Hunter," at Unity Theatre

IN the absence of the Old Vic Company, at the New Theatre we have Mr. Thornton Wilder as the chronicler of the ever-so-small community, the everyday emotion and the tiny tragedy, all as poignant and leisurely as a drawing-room ballad. It is hard to imagine why, with his insistent "passion for compression," he did not let things rest with *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden*, which expresses in one act and with a miraculous economy and delicacy of emotional emphasis, all he has to say about American small town family life. *Our Town* is an expanded picture of the same subject, and I found it two-thirds too long.

There is a coy tinge of virtuous self-deprecation about the Andy Hardy families in Grover's Corners, New Hampshire; an enthusiastic attitude of "In our ordinariness and lack of false sophistication lie our extraordinary niceness and wholesome virtue," that defeats its end. Mr. Jed Harris's producing skilfully manages to disclaim any pretence to existence, which is the supreme virtue in early Wilder, and the American cast are all delightfully precise.

I wish I could say that there was more lively interest to be found at Unity, where they are pursuing a resolutely international policy in choice of play. After two American problems, they offer Mr. David Martin's *The Shepherd and the Hunter*, a presentation of the Palestine problem without solution or thesis other than the lesson that violence breeds itself. The equally tortuous problem of turning serious, well-intentioned, often crude, pamphlet material into a human play is also left unresolved. The plot lacks shape and tension and is over-burdened with explanatory recapitulation; the characters are little more than dutiful

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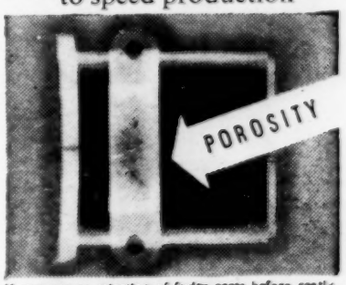

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WRITE TO **KODAK**
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mouthpieces. Political tragedy must first convince as human tragedy. The play relies for its climax on beating-up and a gory death, Warner-film style. I was not persuaded by the British raj, personified in a wicked captain who drinks while men are betrayed and shot at his instigation, and his superior officer who sees the other side of the question as far as his rank will permit. The removal of a hard white light hanging in the middle of the stage would help the later scenes; at present it makes concentration doubly difficult.

SIRIOL HUGH JONES

RADIO NOTES

To my ear *The Wallace Case* seemed to be the almost perfect broadcast. The straightforward, but most cunningly managed, reconstruction of this mysterious murder was breathlessly exciting. Noel Iliff's production was so adroit and so self-effacing that almost immediately one ceased to be conscious that this was acting at all: it might have been an Outside broadcast. Apart from a music-hall policeman, who attempted to steal a sequence that did not belong to him, all the performers caught the naturalistic tone of the programme with equal intelligence. The conclusion? Those who are by nature suspicious will, I suppose, agree with the jury that this mild, middle-aged man battered his wife to death under the influence of a *coup de tête*. If so, schizophrenia can seldom have gone further. The evidence seemed to be purely circumstantial. And what about that diary, which, if insincere, was pointless? I conclude in Wallace's favour; but not the least of the virtues of this masterly production was that it observed scrupulous impartiality and permitted none of the voices unduly to attract or repel sympathy.

What a low opinion women seem to have of one another! At the risk of being caught out, I am prepared to bet that it was Miss Constanduros, and not Mr. Agg, who invented the chief character in *The Tunnel*. Not that Myra North was impossible—especially in the voice of Cathleen Nesbitt; but the portrait seemed rather venomously drawn. Unnecessary, in view of the authorship, to insist on the admirable construction of the play, the economy, the cleverness which obviated the interruptions of a narrator. This kind of script shows up the amateurishness of so many radio plays that drag themselves wearily along the air. Few writers in the medium take sufficient care over the *length* of their sequences. In its earlier phases *The Tunnel* was most judiciously timed; but the final working out was not as convincing as it might have been if the authors had not foreshortened it rather wildly.

Senior and Co., described as a fantasy in verse, had a good idea—that of the old antique dealer who turns out to be Time himself and so to have seen the origins of all the goods in his shop. The conception is charming, but Mr. Rostrevor Hamilton's verse turned out to be rather conventional, and although one is tempted to beat about the bush on occasions like this, the fact remains that it is rash to work up to a climax the material of which (in this case Cleopatra) has already been thoroughly explored by no less a poet than Shakespeare.

In one of those Forces Educational talks which—with the Schools broadcasts—are now among the best of the staple fare provided by the B.B.C., that scholarly critic, Mr. Bonamy Dobrée, gave his sanction to the ancient heresy that simplicity and directness are necessary to good story-telling. Surely it depends on the kind of story you have to tell. Mr. Dobrée instanced one from the Bible; he might equally have chosen Chehov or Maupassant. But what about Balzac, Henry James, D. H. Lawrence, Mauriac, Elizabeth Bowen? Not good story-tellers? Think again. Even as advice to would-be writers I am not convinced that Mr. Dobrée's dictum is wholly true. What a glum literature we shall have if everybody starts imitating the style of Stendhal! Decorative, involved writing has other (and no doubt worse) pitfalls; but even inferior examples of it usually have a certain beauty and vitality of their own, whereas nothing can make palatable the thin gruel of "simple direct" writers who have nothing to say.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*Sunday, May 12th.* Symphony Concert (2.30 p.m.); Queen Victoria was Furious (7 p.m.); The Challenge of our Time (C. H. Waddington, 9.15 p.m.).

Monday, May 13th. The Symphony (Forces Educational Broadcast, L.P. 3 p.m.); If you'd Lived then (7.40 p.m.); A Comedy of Good and Evil (9.15 p.m.); Philharmonic Ensemble (11.30 p.m.).

Tuesday, May 14th. Piano Recital (Rudolf Firkusny, 10.15 p.m.).

Wednesday, May 15th. Book Talk (Geoffrey Grigson, 6.20 p.m.); Symphony Concert (7 p.m.).

Thursday, May 16th. Good Writing (L.P. 3 p.m.); Ernest Maynard (3 p.m.); Concert (7.10 p.m.).

Friday, May 17th. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (L.P. 10 a.m.); Symphony Concert (3 p.m.); The Colonies (8 p.m.); The Hambledon Men (9.30 p.m.); Thomas Campbell (11.30 p.m.).

Saturday, May 18th. Concert (2.10 and 3.10 p.m.); Brahms Piano Quintet (11.3 p.m.).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Correspondence

SENTENCE ON DR. MAY

SIR,—For the first time since the Middle Ages it will soon be a crime, punishable by a long term of penal servitude, to conduct independent investigation into a whole scientific field, and to publish the results of such investigation. I fully realise the dangers inherent in atomic research, and I was among the first to protest against the use of the atomic bomb, but I doubt whether the public or scientific workers generally have yet appreciated the grave danger of permitting a measure like the Atomic Energy Bill to go unchallenged. Science is wholly unpredictable—it is idiocy to claim that only a minority of highly technical workers will be affected. From now on, not only physicists but mathematicians who never entered a laboratory, medical radiologists, biologists and even field naturalists are likely to be drawn into the field of radioactive investigation. The Government is claiming that its veto will not be abused. It would also claim that the atom bomb itself was not abused. It is claiming a right to restrict the intellect and hamstring the activities of independent research which only those who realise the unity of science can measure.

It is not true that relevant, and therefore secret, data can be got only with the elaborate resources of a large laboratory. *One cannot predict that.* Most of the big discoveries of physics have been made by individual initiative, often, like the classical research on radium, in an old shed and in the teeth of official hostility and contempt. You cannot tell in what branch of research the next step will come. It may be the observation that there is a total absence of bird life or an increase in spontaneous mutation round a particular factory, a sudden access of abortions and malformed babies in a particular district. If legislation which prevents or mutilates the publication of observed fact by "voluntary" censorship is allowed in principle, we shall all of us be living on a volcano liable to erupt into shocking court sentences like the one just passed on Dr. May. Scientists should certainly impose a voluntary censorship on their work—the nuclear workers of this war would have done well to impose one, if only to keep atomic energy out of the irresponsible hands which now hold it. But if there is a certain way of killing research, it is by limiting the right of workers in all fields to communicate with each other. I protest against it with all my strength. This law is envisaged as part of the policy-less nationalism and fear by which our foreign relations are being increasingly hag-ridden. If scientists do not

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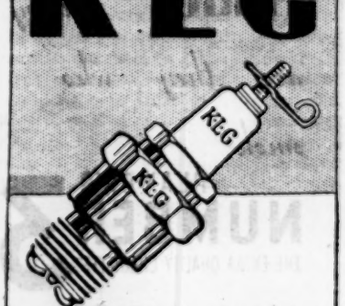

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combine to defy and end it, it will destroy both science and us.

ALEXANDER COMFORT

20 Honor Oak Road, S.E.23.

SIR,—I expect that many of your readers were as shocked as I was at the harsh sentence passed on Dr. Alan Nunn May.

"This offence," said the Attorney-General, "consists in communicating information to unauthorised persons." It seems to me that the idea that knowledge is the property of the State where it originates, and that a scientist or anyone else who communicates it to any person not authorised by the State to receive it is committing a crime, is inimical to liberty. Intellectual freedom might well take its place with the other four.

Is it too much to hope that the public and Members of Parliament will press the Home Secretary to review this case?

T. RENDALL DAVIES

1 Greenwood Gardens,
Palmers Green, N. 13.

DEMOCRACY *v.* SOCIALISM

SIR,—When two people find it difficult to agree they should be given separate jobs to do. Russia has a big job to do in Eastern Europe and should be allowed to do it without any irritating interference from the West. Anglo-American relations were never cordial until we frankly recognised the Monroe Doctrine. A similar Monroe Doctrine for the Russian sphere in Eastern Europe should now be recognised by the Western Allies.

If we do this, Russia cannot logically object to the formation of a similar regional arrangement in the West. Its *raison d'être* goes back much further than Locarno. It goes back to the Roman-Hellenic Empire and the common cultural traditions of 2,500 years. Asia has her traditions also, equally venerable, but they are different from ours and have their own territorial field of expression. Communism is the expression of a cultural habit as well as an economic creed. Social-Democracy has similar economic aims but a different cultural background and different political habits.

The two need not clash. A Western Bloc based on Social-Democracy and an Eastern Bloc based on Communism can live side by side in perfect amity, exchanging commodities (possibly, to a large extent, by barter) but devoting their main energies to internal reconstruction and development. The task of rebuilding and developing the Soviet social and economic civilisation in the East and the reconstruction and welding together of Western Europe, with a common currency and customs arrangements and a unified system of handling trade, industry, transport, fuel and food, will provide work for the statesmen of both areas for many years to come. Under such an arrangement the problem of Germany, at any rate of Western Germany, could be merged in the common problem of Europe and solved with it.

At certain points abutting on the suggested line of demarcation rivalries at present exist. These points of possible conflict should be converted into points of positive co-operation. If the two sides cease to aggravate each other, as they are doing at present, by heaving half-bricks into each other's back gardens (a perfectly useless proceeding and a waste of building material) there is no reason why these questions should not be satisfactorily settled by some system of joint control, joint supply boards or international supervision under Uno.

I gather that Mr. Zilliacus would not object to such "West and East European groupings" as long as they are accompanied by "all-European arrangements." I would like him to define more precisely what he considers those arrangements should be. Everyone will approve of "all-European arrangements" which aim at extending the area of co-operation without expanding the arena for "open disagreements openly arrived at." At the present time an all-European arrangement for food production and distribution would be very acceptable.

Everyone agrees that the future Peace of the World depends upon friendship and co-operation between Britain, Russia and America. I believe that this plan would provide the foundation for such friendship and co-operation, and that a meeting of the Big Three, on the highest level, should be called to consider it.

House of Commons.

SEYMOUR COCKS

MIKOLAJCZYK

SIR,—Mr. Zilliacus, I am sorry to say, continues to get his information on Polish affairs from biased sources. I have never had and have not the slightest intention to stay here as an "emigré" and I have politically nothing in common with those "London Poles," who opposed Mr. Mikolajczyk's determined policy, which made him accept the Moscow compromise of June, 1945, and enter the Polish Government in Warsaw. On the contrary, I was and continue to be a faithful supporter of Mr. Mikolajczyk's policy of coalition and unity, and it seems funny to me to be accused of taking a different line. I certainly do deny that Mr. Mikolajczyk's influence to-day rests mainly on the fact of his former relationship with the British Government. Mr. Mikolajczyk's unchallenged present leadership of the Polish masses is due to his firm stand for true democracy against the totalitarian tendencies of both the extreme Right and the extreme Left, to his gallant stand for early elections run according to the same ideas as those which inspire British Labour. Mr. Zilliacus is also seriously mistaken if he considers my information as not "direct." I can assure him that it is very genuine and far from the propaganda stuff which Mr. Zilliacus so readily believes. He also seems to overlook the fact that the signatories of the agreements of Yalta, Moscow and Potsdam are pledged to see the will of the majority of the Polish people respected at an early date.

ADAM ROMER

275 The White House,
Albany Street, N.W.1.

UNRRA AND POLITICS

SIR,—In his original statement Mr. Zilliacus claimed that the British and U.S. Governments were "making political capital out of the state of semi-starvation in Poland" and were letting it be known that they would use Unrra supplies for their political purposes. I asked him for evidence or withdrawal. He now invites me to "enquire in authoritative Polish circles." The unsatisfactory nature of such evidence is apparent, and I content myself by accepting his statement "I cannot prove something that has not yet happened." A withdrawal would surely have been more gracious.

Mr. Zilliacus sticks to his theme, however, and since he has no proof about Poland he moves to Yugoslavia. He claims that there has been discrimination against that country because of its "Red" Government whereas the British Government has looked well after its "protégés in Greece" by ensuring generous Unrra allocations to that country. He quotes figures to prove his case—Greece was receiving about "eight times what the rest of the Balkans were getting." I do not know the period to which your correspondent refers, but here are the Unrra shipment figures for the year 1945—Yugoslavia, 970,113 tons, Greece, 1,795,193 tons. So much for the arithmetic of Mr. Zilliacus! It has already been publicly explained that there are several good reasons why Greece received more supplies than Yugoslavia in the year 1945. The Greek Government immediately invited an Unrra mission into their country to carry out relief work and import supplies. In the case of Marshal Tito there were long negotiations before he would permit a mission to enter Yugoslavia. In the case of Greece port facilities for the receiving and transport of supplies were available much earlier than was the case in Yugoslavia. As a result Greece has been receiving Unrra supplies for a longer period than her neighbour and the total shipments for 1945 reveal a larger total. It may interest Mr. Zilliacus

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to know that for the first month of 1946, shipment figures are as follows: Yugoslavia, 195,800 tons, Greece, 167,300 tons. Throughout 1946 the planned shipments for Yugoslavia are substantially greater than those for Greece. Unrra will cease operations in Europe at the end of this year, and it is no secret that the total estimated expenditure on supplies for Yugoslavia will greatly exceed the total amount which will have been spent for relief to Greece.

It would appear, therefore, that Mr. Zilliacus is on no safer grounds in the Balkans when he makes his ill-informed criticisms of Unrra and when he suggests that it is the political instrument of the U.K. or U.S. Governments. I should have imagined that Mr. Zilliacus, who, like myself, is a member of the Labour Party, would have been interested in stimulating the development of international organisation. His references to "Dirty work at Unrra" etc., can only create further suspicion and distrust, which makes such development increasingly difficult.

Rutherglen, Scotland. TOM TAYLOR

STEEL

SIR,—As a Conservative reader of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION I hope I may be allowed to make some comment on the article "Why Nationalise Steel?" in your issue of May 4th. In doing so it is proper for me to say that I am in no way connected with the iron and steel industry, nor have I a single penny piece invested in it, but I do happen by reason of my pre-war vocation of economist to have had considerable experience of it over a long period.

To deal first with the allegation that the industry is in a "shocking condition" and that it is "inefficient." During the war years the industry was successful in satisfying almost all of the needs of the armed Forces. In 1943, the peak year, its satisfaction of demand against supply was 100.8 per cent. and in 1944 it was 98.1 per cent. During the war the industry produced and handled 86 million tons of steel; of this 14 million tons were imported and the rest manufactured at home. During the war period the industry mined and used over 100 million tons of iron ore. To consider what has happened since the war the increase of iron and steel exports tells its own story. Here are the figures:

Year and Month	Quantity (tons)	Value (£)
1945 January	15,829	734,150
1946 January	168,642	5,231,527
February ..	186,018	5,997,472
March	211,000	6,750,000

In the first quarter of 1946 both the volume and value of our iron and steel exports were well above the average for the same period of 1938. I would venture to say that an industry that is able to turn itself over very quickly to war production, fulfil the enormous demands of the armed Forces for iron and steel, turn itself back equally quickly to peace production, and make a steadily increasing contribution to our export trade, can hardly be in a "shocking condition" or "inefficient."

The writer of the article says, "On the score of price the British trade can be well beaten in its traditional markets by both American and Dominion producers." I have no figures of Dominion prices, but what are the facts so far as American prices are concerned? Coal is the major factor in the production cost of steel. Before the war British coal was twice as dear as American but on a proper comparison British steel was from 5 to 10 per cent. cheaper than American. To-day British coal is approximately four times as dear as American, but our steel prices are only slightly higher than those of the U.S.A.

While wholesale prices in general had risen by June, 1945—the latest available figures—to 68 per cent. above 1938, coal had risen by nearly 98 per cent., but steel prices by only 36 per cent.

House of Commons. J. BAKER WHITE

EDWARD THOMPSON

SIR,—Critic's tribute to Edward Thompson, whose death we all mourn, is excellent; and what Mr. Sen says in his letter is also fine and true. May I, however, refer to one or two things not generally known?

Thompson was essentially a poet, and it was his ambition to be a notable poet; but he went out to India, saw its misery and degradation, and could not rest. He had to do something for this unhappy country. He achieved a great deal—more than is given to most men. His own dreams? Well, they did not matter. What was a crown of bay leaves compared with the regeneration of a vast nation? When we talk of Thompson's services to India we must never forget this sacrifice, which is the greatest that an artist can make.

This is not the place to offer a critical estimate of Thompson's writings; but I may say that he threw off beautiful poems, and his historical studies are honest and impartial, lit up here and there by a truer light than the dull eye of dry-as-dust academics.

He did not like many of his novels, and was inclined to dismiss them too readily. True, they are not rich in artistic content, but then how many English novels are? Say what you will, they are the most understanding ever written about us by a Western. The point is, we did not have to explain things to Thompson; a word was enough to make him see our point of view. Anyhow, *Burmese Silver* and *The Youngest Disciple* are first-rate. The latter is the best imaginative reconstruction of the life of the Buddha that I know in any language.

Of Thompson the friend I could write a great deal. We trusted him because he trusted us. And he was frank, fearless, fundamentally good. And how nice he was to us Indians—always ready to help. In fact, we thought him to be one of us. This is the greatest compliment we can pay him.

RANJEE G. SHAHANI

MIHAILOVITCH

SIR,—I have only just seen Brigadier Maclean's letter to you referring to mine on the subject of Mihailovitch. It would appear that the error he talks of was on the part of those who instructed him to inform Marshal Tito that all British forces with Mihailovitch had been withdrawn.

Knowing as he does the circumstances prevailing at that time, I am rather surprised that Brigadier Maclean uses the word "withdrawn." It would have been quite impossible for us at the end of 1943 or during the first six months of 1944 to withdraw, even if we had orders to do so, which we had not.

As a matter of fact, there apparently was an error in my letter, although it does not affect the issue in question. I should have said we landed in Yugoslavia in August 1942, not 1943.

"Downside," Findon, Sussex. L. J. HARPER

[Mr. Harper's letter adds to the mystery. How did it come about that he was still with Mihailovitch as late as January, 1945, if Brigadier Maclean had been instructed to inform Marshal Tito that all British liaison officers had been withdrawn from Mihailovitch in 1944? Does he imply that H.M.G. was telling a deliberate lie to Tito?

Mr. Harper says nothing of the point raised by a correspondent about how a poster offering rewards for Tito and Mihailovitch could have been displayed by the Germans in November, 1945, more than six months after the war had come to an end.—ED., N.S. & N.]

COMMON WEALTH

SIR,—You say our Conference "looked like its last Conference." To whom did it present this depressing appearance? Certainly not to a single delegate present. The Conference was bigger than last year's. The secretary reported a steady increase of membership during 1946. The enthusiasm was such that, on the last day, without any appeal from the platform, donations and offers of personal service poured in. Every branch report subsequently received reveals a fresh outburst of activity.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

One reads all the time that the English novel has been changed by this or that—generally by large abstractions like psycho-analysis or the emancipation of women; yet when one looks into the background of the novel and sees how vast an acreage has been filled with a brownish and twiggy landscape it is possible to wonder whether any change has been so profound as the disappearance of the horse from everyday life. Not least in its picturesque aspect. Right up to the death of Henry James, though the fact may never be mentioned, the hounds were streaming distantly beyond the strenuous villages and bunched gardens of our fiction, though in cry too regular to distract attention from the lovers and victims before us. Even Mr. Lydgate, the Middlemarch doctor, is known to have hunted. In fact, the birth of the modern novel can almost be pinned down at the moment when Market Harborough, or something like it, was supplanted as the obvious pattern for a country setting first by the Thames Valley and then, as though that were not sufficiently sheltered and built over to protect the fragile society of the early 1900's—by the villa colonies of Surrey and Kent.

Perhaps it is this continuity of landscape which makes the explicitly hunting novelists of the nineteenth century so large in evocation. Inarticulate figures in a countryside taken for granted start up in pink coats; everyone is prosperous and healthy and gay. The uncouth baronets and battered witches, who make the Midland counties in real life hideous, assume touching shapes, until the names of Surtees and Alken and Nimrod and Leech suggest an English *grande époque* as surely as Crébillon *fils* and Debucourt a French. Market Harborough, I thought once again—as I put away Whyte-Melville's little book of that name—Market Harborough, far more than Oxford or Manchester or Gordon Square, is the English glory we aspire to or escape from. Was there ever a time when everybody knew his place? Was good fellowship ever both attractive and universal? Was there in those days a sure supply of thunderstruck landowners to stand beside the pianoforte while plump divinities played their variations and Mamma looked on smiling? And the boots from Bartley's, the breeches from Tautz, the cold partridge and brown sherry, ten hunters in the stables and Parson Dove standing by the wine-cooler, were these ever the normal accidentals of existence, like the Eversharp pencil in one's pocket and a man coming to mend the gas fire? Whyte-Melville can convince us that there was such a time. Not, it must be admitted, by the exercise of any astonishing talent. He must be read, Sir Michael Sadleir has said, "with a kind of wistful admiration"; probably very few people read him at all, and his name is never likely to cut a figure in any series of popular reprints. Yet he must be remembered now and then for a kind of simple sincerity which great imaginative writers lack: the sincerity of gossip-mongers, diarists, children's romancers. By the confidential passion with which he rambles from chapter to chapter he manages to fix the attention without grace of style or sustained invention. Especially, he makes one want to know more about himself. And here one fails. Whyte-Melville is the warning example of what happens to a writer who does not live among other writers. He has not been written down by posterity; he has merely not been written about at all.

The ascertainable facts are quite diverting, however. He went from Eton under Keate into the Coldstream Guards and served in the Crimean War as a major of Turkish irregular cavalry. This was the one adventure of his life. For the rest, he lived the life of a country card, fortified by plenty of money and a close family relationship to the Duke of Leeds. He seems never to have considered himself a professional writer, in spite of an enormous output, and the money he earned was dedicated to the promotion of reading-rooms for stable-boys. He was the most knowledgeable man of his time on each detail of leathers, straps, stocks, jackboots, yet in his own person one of the most untidy; and after an unsuccessful marriage which gives to several of his later books their one streak of bitterness, he was killed in a hunting accident in his fifties. There the record stops. Letters never seem to mention him; his friends are not of the kind who write memoirs; "Drink, puppy, drink" and "Wrap me up in my tarpaulin jacket" are probably known to many who could not put a name to the author, but to critics of the nineteenth-century novel he represents only another collected edition. It must be said, too, that his historical romances are unreadable.

Yet it was the historical romances which brought him popularity. They cover so vast a ground that no pattern can be discerned in the choice of subject. Whyte-Melville jumps from *Sarchedon*, a study in Wardour Street dynastic Egyptian, to *The Queen's Maries*. There is a painstaking tale of Rome and Judæa, and *Cerise*, a clattering evocation of the eighteenth century. These fill, in fact, in their own manner, exactly the place of the modern historical film. Interspersed, however, is a number of contemporary novels, beginning with *Digby Grand*, dipping into autobiography with *The Interpreter*, which draws on experience of the Crimean War, and generally conceived as a fairly adroit mixture of sport and sentiment. The speed with which these books were written is prodigious. They come tumbling out in the Fifties and Sixties sometimes at the rate of two a year. Why they were written at all is utterly obscure.

It was clearly not his intention to use the novel as a deliberate literary form; he never shows the least interest in any literary form, for that matter, unless his first published work, a translation of Horace, is to be taken as a nostalgic tribute to the workaday scholarship of Upper School at Eton. But here and there in these casual best-sellers a flash of pure pleasure is communicated, not fine, certainly, but honest and robust. And among the clichés of a hopelessly unambitious prose a sudden glow touches the page. A hunting landscape is often enough to light the flame; the intrusion of human relationships on the simple world of horses in winter is regularly enough to put it out again. It is the glow of a single spark, coloured and focussed by the necessary touch of personal sadness. The spark is a happy sense of community—an almost monkish constancy of fervour within a privileged world of men all going the same way and all knowing where they stand. The personal sadness is harder to define. It lies perhaps in the failure of his marriage to make more of women either in books or real life than a romantic intrusion. Once, in *Katerfelto*, the glow is sustained through an entire book; but then *Katerfelto* is one of those special products of the Victorian genius, a book addressed to grown-ups but perpetuating itself as a children's tale. Significantly, perhaps, it is the story of "the best horse in England." As soon as Whyte-Melville writes about horses, the prose comes to life; if he is read to-day it is in the nursery.

It was, therefore, with surprise that I found myself engrossed in *Market Harborough* with so active a pleasure. It is a little book, discursive, unshapely, scarcely more than a series of gently coloured scenes, written, it seems, out of one emotion only, that of affection. There is a hunt ball, a steeple-chase, a meet or two and a fair amount of hard riding. How tepid, it may be objected, how incuriously remote from the vivid springs of fiction, how dull to those who don't hunt. Yet somehow it isn't dull. These plain Midland gentlemen of the 1860's, their indomitable grooms, and the lackadaisical visitors from London who show such courage at the risk of a collar-boner, catch at our interest not only from Whyte-Melville's easy account of their loves and accidents, or from the envious pleasure of watching them pass every evening with a magnum of claret, but also from a constant astonishment that they existed so near to living memory. Whyte-Melville evidently believed in the authenticity of the Honourable Crasher and the rest of them. And from the affective warmth of his belief he is able to make us think that there must have been something very generous and happy in the upper-class pleasures of mid-Victorian England before the eighteenth century was smoked right out of them by the wealth and rancour of the industrial suburbs.

This is confirmed from an unexpected source. There is no more fascinating picture of the social break-up of the Victorian age than in Wells's realistic novels. *Tono-Bungay*, in particular, with its contrast between the aristocratic Bladesover tradition, sterile if you like but still splendid, and the fertility rites of the new age of science, is an admirable comment on Whyte-Melville. No one is more sensitive to the "traditional and ostensible England" than this lower middle-class prophet; nobody, surprisingly enough, looks back with greater nostalgia to the tough and cheerful virtues which two generations earlier bound together the whole community of Market Harborough (it appears)—during the winter months at least. The Bladesover at which he rails is the Bladesover of 1900, when the old order had been overtaken and swallowed up by the hypertrophy of a gross industrial civilisation. In 1860, Bladesover was not yet visibly sunk either in snobbery or commerce. Deficient in taste and sensibility it was; no amount of satisfaction in the honest virtues of Whyte-Melville's country gentlemen can conceal the pug-like obtuseness of the countenance. They quote freely from the easier classics, but only, it is clear, because the tags have been birched well into them. Their elegance of mind is limited to a narrow vision of the world which can be caught from horseback. It includes an enchanted sense of open country, the fabulous neatness of glittering harness-rooms, and a special kind of aristocratic popular art which still survives in such things as the labels of saddle-soap boxes and the patterns in coloured sand which, long after chalk had deserted fashionable ballroom floors, were—and are—still found on the flags of stableyards. No doubt it is this identification of the aristocratic with the popular which forms the rational basis for looking with approval on such novels as *Market Harborough*. In the specialised little community of which they treat there really are no class-hatreds. It is a world where the horse-coper scores off the major one day, and the major tricks the parson to-morrow. All scores are settled by a bumper of claret and nobody is long the loser. The grooms always come out on top anyway, the farmers have no foreboding of the agricultural depression of the next decade. Emotions are dealt with firmly. Any runaway tendency is nipped, as in public schools, by hard exercise and a cold bath. Finally, there is nothing surprising in the only moral to be drawn in retrospect; that the classless society, to be unselfconscious, has to be both prosperous financially and elementary in its pursuits.

For already Bladesover was only a shadow. It must have looked solid enough to a middle-aged pupil of Dr. Keate, through whose indulgent eyes it still seems solid to ourselves. But a very few years later a troubling figure in the housekeeper's room began noting the signs of decay upstairs. That little boy—though *Tono-Bungay* was not published until 1909—knocked the aristocracy out of fiction far more effectively than any collar-boner—so effectively that economics have only followed the lead given by imagination. Thus for the last forty years the upper classes in fiction have either been lay figures inserted for their snob value or subjects for patient clinical examination. As real people they vanished with their horses, leaving a small but genuine pleasure to be extracted from the spectacle of Mr. Sawyer and the Honourable Crasher, foolish, harmless and immensely happy, hacking to the meet between bare sunlit hedges without any idea that somewhere in the Manchester smoke Friedrich Engels was already thinking about them and that the baby in the housekeeper's room was to be born in a year or two.

ALAN PRYCE-JONES

SHELLEY

Shelley—A Life Story. By EDMUND BLUNDEN. *Collins.* 12s. 6d.

If lately a boy had said: "I love what I've read of Shelley's poems and want to know something about his life, the sort of man he was and what he did," what could one have honestly recommended? Dowden, with simpering flights of imagination where evidence failed? Walter Peck, with two vast fascines of fact bound in pedantic American haywire? Arnold, with "What a set!"? Maurois, with paper boats right up to the last? All quite unsuitable: even Shelley's own letters wouldn't do, as collected in the Ingpen edition. In feeble doubt one might have given him Symonds's book in the English Men of Letters or Olwen Ward Campbell's *Shelley and the Unromantics*. Now, for several generations, there will be no doubt.

This book is not only a great achievement in itself, but an event in the mental history of the future. Wherever English is spoken or taught, Shelley is with the young a focus and stimulus of enthusiasm for poetry and for politics: to the young they are both modes of imaginative activity, and Shelley thought of them always as closely linked. Much therefore depends on the idea of him that is formed.

Mr. Blunden starts with the belief that Shelley was one of the plainest examples of "the supreme capacity called genius," and that "his adventurous and many-sided life" was "unified by a deepening faith in the artist's duty and power in human advancement." Even by Regency standards his life was odd, and Mr. Blunden's triumph is that he has made this oddity human, credible and sympathetic; he has neither exalted nor toned down, vulgarised or explained away. By deliberately compressing his work into one volume he has been able to bring out the unity he stresses: every sentence tells, and the book is full of vitality. He is perhaps the only man living who could have done this, because of the quality of his knowledge; it is altogether scholarly—he moves with ease this way and that through the unholy jungle of documents, complicated by biased reminiscence, false gossip, suppression and forgery: he knows not only Shelley, but the period, the other people and the places—but beyond scholarship he has a deep, familiar imaginative understanding which brings Shelley into intelligible relations with a full and vivid world. The reader feels confidence in his rightness and integrity from the start. The home life at Field Place, Sir Bysshe, the family connection with the Dukes of Norfolk, the Horsham tradesmen, the local traditions of St. Leonard's Forest all slip at once into convincing perspective. The legend that life at Eton was an unresting orgy of flogging and fisticuffs quietly gives place to a portrait of a living and exciting school where Shelley suffered persecution and misery certainly, but where he also had some success, some happiness and fun, a school which actually taught him very thoroughly what it claimed to teach! For Eton must have its share of credit for Shelley's absorbing, infinitely fruitful love of the classics.

The book's next great merit is its re-distribution of emphasis. Mr. Blunden has refused to measure the importance of an episode by the amount of evidence about it that happens to have survived, or the amount of others' speculations. Thus, the Oxford chapter, though clear and full enough, is short: Miss Hitchener and Fanny Imlay take properly minor places: Hogg, who later imposed himself grandiosely on Shelley literature, is reduced in size without being slighted. The treatment of the Godwins is ingenious: there is no full-dress description of the Skinner Street household; even the crucial meetings with Mary are done very economically; but Godwin runs all through the book like a malaria which, once caught, may suddenly without warning bring on horrible fevers. Perhaps the biggest positive change of emphasis is in the importance given to Leigh Hunt and "the Hampstead set." This is no fanciful predilection of Hunt's biographer; but his knowledge makes possible a fresh and necessary view of Shelley, showing how the Hampstead evenings saved him when his nerves were bare to every breeze during the crisis of Harriet's death and the Chancery suit; and also how through them his literary isolation was modified and his range of sympathies increased. Mr. Blunden is specially good in suggesting the reasons why the acquaintanceship between Shelley and Keats never matured, and in the biographical analysis of *Adonais*. In all the later chapters the balance between the Hunt group and the Byron group is nicely kept, with Shelley as the quivering needle between grandeur and Cockneydom.

The poems are treated throughout as incidents in the life, and are criticised mainly from that angle. Mr. Blunden exerts his sharpest and most moving writing to describe the local and emotional settings which stirred Shelley to creation. The avoidance of ambitious speculative interpretations is a guarantee that this book will last; skill and judgment have controlled it everywhere, but it is mostly Shelley who speaks, or his friends who speak about him, or a scene is calmly and impersonally reconstructed. There is some lyricism, but no indecent ecstasy. Some readers may complain that there is not enough about Shelley's ideas, his philosophical reading, his intellectual development: they are deliberately excluded except as affecting what he did. For this is "a life story," a "narrative," and it is wiser to sympathise with the author in his hard decisions about what to exclude than to blame him for not doing what he never meant. Only a lifetime of familiarity with the sources could have made these decisions so sure, and in result so splendidly effective.

One major exclusion must have cost Mr. Blunden many qualms: there are no references of any kind, no footnotes and no bibliography. The book thus looks clean and attractive to the general reader, and tells its own tale; but thousands of readers will regret it. Let us hope these thousands will be able to get a copy, too; happily, the state of the text suggests that the Collins Clear-Type Press has been misprinting at high pressure to meet an inevitable huge demand.

HUMPHRY HOUSE

CHINA THROUGH FIFTEEN EYES

Shake Hands with the Dragon. By CARL GLICK. *Herbert Jenkins.* 12s. 6d.

Rice Bowl Broken. By MADELINE MUNDAY. *Hutchinson.* 15s.

Give Back my Rivers and Hills. By W. I. FENG. *Macmillan.* 8s. 6d.

Chinese Science. By DR. JOSEPH NEEDHAM. *Pilot Press.* 7s. 6d.

China Cycle. By RICHARD DOBSON. *Macmillan.* 12s. 6d.

China: Her Life and Her People. By MILDRED CABLE and FRANCESCA FRENCH. *Univ. of London Press.* 5s.

The Vigil of a Nation. By LIN YUTANG. *Heinemann.* 12s. 6d.

China and the Chinese are now fashionable subjects; the western world begins to be China-conscious. The days of Fu Manchu and Chu Chin Chow are over and real human beings take the place in knowledge and imagination of those picturesque caricatures. Yet I suspect that the flawless characters portrayed by Carl Glick in *Shake Hands with the Dragon* will be almost as unrecognisable to the Chinese themselves as the lurid opium addicts of Sax Rohmer's gangsters. Carl Glick fell in love with the Chinese community in America and his love was not only blind but naive. Madeline Munday, the author of *Rice Bowl Broken*, spent fifteen years in China and witnessed the disintegration under Japanese rule. Her observations are almost entirely superficial; unlike Carl Glick, she learnt very little about the Chinese character.

What a contrast with Mr. Feng's book: *Give Back my Rivers and Hills*. Mr. Feng has the advantage of a sense of poetry. He too writes of the sufferings of war but as a devoted patriot with a feeling for beauty as well as for tragedy; he makes us share the longings of *Give Back My Rivers and Hills*. Miss Munday adds one more book to the long list of journalistic reports of air raids and evacuations and the difficulties as well as the adventures common to all reporters from Shanghai to Bristol. Her rice bowl was broken when she left Shanghai but a week in Capri or Honolulu might mend it. Mr. Feng's story, sensitively translated by Innes Jackson, ends at a meeting where he and his fellow-soldiers plan guerrilla tactics for their return to Shantung province.

Mr. Richard Dobson's *China Cycle* describes how his employers happened to send him to China because they thought a population of 450 millions would consume mountains of tobacco if he could persuade them to smoke his firm's cigarettes. But his work took him into the interior and both in his capacity as a salesman and later as a Flying-Officer, he travelled thousands of miles, in all kinds of vehicles, staying in all kinds of odd remote places, sampling many known and even more unknown drinks with great gusto. His book is lively, individual and knockabout, and he would have been wise to blue-pencil a few of his hangovers, especially as he acquired a serious interest in Chinese affairs. At an aerodrome on the Burma frontier he reflected that it was "a privilege, almost a pleasure to be fighting the Japanese." He was convinced of China's victory but appreciated the need in the post-war world of business integrity and a civil service worthy of the Chinese people and their civilisation.

Dr. Needham's *Chinese Science* does a brilliant job in introducing us to largely unknown scientific work in China. Excellent photographs illustrate his tour round the scientific institutes where young China makes experiments of far-reaching importance with all kinds of makeshift accommodation and instruments. Cold scientific phrases, such as cereal genetics and the stabilisation of radio frequency, meaningless to the layman, come to life when they are translated into photographs of Chinese young men and women in their laboratories in Taoist temples against a background of old images. This is an illuminating, unusual book on China both to the general and the scientific public.

Like Joseph Needham, Mildred Cable and Francesca French have an admiration for the Chinese people. Few books have given us as completely satisfying a description of North China as *The Gobi Desert*, one of their earlier books. But *China: Her Life and Her People* has none of its personal adventure. It gives a good descriptive background of Chinese landscape and social custom covering north, south and central China. Contrasts are well drawn between these different areas which are generally overlooked. Everything is here for a lively schoolbook; calligraphy, geography, history, and a chapter on art and poetry and the kind of story which is popularised by professional storytellers. The authors are Christians and although they have become so much assimilated by Chinese life, their approach is too reminiscent of the "heathen Chinee" whose conversion to a religion based on entirely different traditions is presupposed to be an advantage to himself and his country. Three chapters are devoted to Christianity in China; one short chapter to Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Mohammedanism, which is an unfortunate disproportion in what would otherwise be such a useful textbook.

The Vigil of a Nation shows China to us through two more eyes, or rather through one more, since the author, Lin Yutang, has a blind eye where the Chinese Communists are concerned. Their inclusion in Mr. Lin Yutang's picture was gratuitous. He was never in the Communist areas and much that he wrote has since been disproved. But turn the pages quickly over these highly prejudiced and violent diatribes and travel with Lin Yutang, the scholar, the

"cultured vagabond," the imaginative, often poetical diarist, and Chinese history becomes alive. Forget that this distinguished writer sometimes degenerates into a cheap pamphleteer answering back the American journalists who have lyricised the Chinese Communists, and look with him at the Tunhwang caves where "every corner is filled with paintings of celestial musicians and Buddhist legends, and stories of wars and hunts," or the tall stone pagoda in the Chungnan Hills where Hsuan Chuang is buried. Hsuan Chuang spent 18 years in India in the seventh century A.D. and then devoted his life to translating thirteen hundred volumes of the Buddhist scriptures. Lin Yutang is at his best in this kind of anecdotal diary. To him as to Mr. Feng, the rivers and the hills of China are his homeland. His enormous public will be much indebted to him if he leaves once more the seductive comforts of New York and returns to his native home to interpret his countrymen to us.

DOROTHY WOODMAN

NEW NOVELS AND STORIES

Private Angelo. By ERIC LINKLATER. *Cape.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Weekday in June. By FERENC KÖRMENDI. *Hutchinson.* 9*s.*

The Clouds as Big with Mercy. By FRED URQUHART. *Maclellan.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

We should write something that will make people forget that there are such things as prostitution and kids going hungry and men working long hours for small pays and graft and disease and rich men getting richer off the arms racket, the blood of the soldiers and the sweat of the workers.

So, with rather over-weighted irony, writes Mr. Urquhart, stating with revealing crudity a dogma which has been more cautiously propounded by Arthur Koestler. (Koestler would never have been guilty of so conventional and uninspiring a catalogue: genuine indignation at the "arms racket" and "sweat of the workers" has been rendered almost impossible by the mere cliché of the phrases.) Surely we may dismiss at once the notion of a *literary obligation* to write about anything, and it is beyond my function to discuss moral obligations. Koestler's statement is significantly different: avoiding any direct assertion of obligation, he claims that a writer who is insensitive to contemporary social anguish will not be a good writer. Yet even this modification appears untenable to me, unless the sensitivity be allowed an indirectness in its manifestation which deprives it of all meaning. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, Edith Sitwell and David Gascoigne are, by common critical consent, among our best living poets; yet their sensitivity to contemporary social anguish is indirect in the extreme. Henry Green and Compton Burnett are among our best living novelists, yet they are far from being socially conscious in the Koestlerian sense. The approach to this perennial issue *must* be empirical. Writers, greatly to the enhanced interest of their category, defy every rule which critics lay down for them. Somebody says that they must live like Flaubert: Baudelaire, Balzac and a hundred others at once disprove the incautious dictum. Somebody insists that they should not allow political passion to intrude: Dante, Voltaire and a hundred others refuse to conform.

A writer is a human being in a human context. His distinction from other human beings is minute—an itch, a distortion, something accidental and altogether involuntary. He lusts, fears and hates very much as the other members of his society lust, fear and hate. It is therefore natural that Mr. Linklater writes as an officer-class Englishman, Mr. Körmendi as a progressive central European and Mr. Urquhart as a proletarian Scotsman. It is natural, but it was not obligatory. Had they been better writers, one would have been less conscious of their backgrounds. Mr. Linklater has written the best book, but its superior merits have nothing whatever to do with the advantages or difficulties of his upbringing. *Private Angelo* would be condemned by Mr. Urquhart. Writing of the Italian campaign, Mr. Linklater is flippant, genial, superficial and fairly insensitive. These attributes preclude him from greatness, but they have not prevented him from writing a most able and sympathetic book. Nor can I feel that there is any indecency in his light and casual treatment of distress. He is aware of human misery, but it does not preoccupy him. He is more aware of human volatility, dishonesty, variety and pictorial splendour. To him the Italian campaign is a pageant, and he treats it with the sort of flamboyance which the late Philip Guedalla displayed in his historical outbursts:

> Of all the triumphs that had marched the Appian Way none had so spaciously shown the enormity of human power as this great spectacle of destruction; and the pity was that the refugees could not appreciate it as it deserved.

This sentence, with its romantic flamboyance and its humane irony, is typical of the spirit in which Mr. Linklater writes. His story, I'd add, is a good and intelligent one, but no more than a picture rail from which he hangs his garish Mediterranean canvases and his little tracts of ironic wisdom. An agreeable book, defiantly unimportant.

Mr. Linklater writes of social upheaval because it amused, even fascinated him. Mr. Körmendi is obsessed by it. *Weekday in June* is an intensely serious book about the most serious subject in the world. One might say that it treats of human salvation and damnation, if it were not that these noble words instantly award an importance which the book is far from deserving. The plan is a skilful one. The Jewish victim and his casual Fascist murderer are allotted alternate narratives throughout the course of their day. They meet from time to time with a sort of unconscious mutual intimacy which momentarily recalls Bloom and Stephen. Each has an appointment with death, though at different ends, so to speak, of the hand grenade. The plan is skilful, the emotion is genuine and the narrative is competent. But the aim is far, far too high. In such a contest mere competence becomes downright stultifying inadequacy. This is a very familiar theme—though it is not, and it never could be, a discredited one. Familiarity of theme demands extreme novelty of reflection and treatment. Mr. Linklater, most skilful of professional writers, matches theme to treatment with an almost beautiful aptness. Mr. Körmendi reiterates high and noble sentiments with sincerity but without the novelty of vision which would alone have justified his reiteration.

While Mr. Linklater is fairly consistently sophisticated and adroit, and Mr. Körmendi consistently dignified, Fred Urquhart is one of those strange hit or miss writers who are so hard to criticise. In the story called *The Big Apple*, from which I've quoted at the beginning of this review, he is outrageously bad—insincere, falsely smart and imitative of all the worst in Hemingway and Saroyan. His intermediate level is consistently maintained in the long story called *Namietnose*. This is a sincere, solemn account of the impact of Polish soldiers on Scotch laundry girls. It rings true but a little bit flat. At his best—in *The Gulls* and *Man About the House*—Mr. Urquhart incontrovertibly shows that he is a skilful and assured artist. Here is a writer ruined by a conscience—an epitomised disproof

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The clumsy writing with its horrid reiteration of "like" is in keeping with the clumsy superfluity of the intervention. Even if one wishes to point a moral Mr. Urquhart must surely know that it cannot be done with such crude directness as this.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

EMINENT RESPECTABILITY

J. A. Spender. By WILSON HARRIS. *Cassell.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Wilson Harris has written this biography of Spender at the request of Mrs. Spender. From many points of view the choice appears to be admirable. Spender was a distinguished journalist and editor; so is Mr. Harris. Spender was a characteristic product and producer of the Liberalism and Liberal journalism of the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th—the era of the Liberal *Pall Mall*, the *Daily News*, the *Daily Chronicle* and the *Westminster Gazette*. The mugwumps of these papers were Massingham, Spender, and A. G. Gardiner. Mr. Harris learnt his Liberalism and his journalism in their school, though he was actually the disciple of Gardiner rather than Spender. Finally he knew Spender well for a period of over 30 years and, as he says himself, "looked on him as the very mould and pattern of the highest type of journalist, alike in competence and in character, a man to whom, for the example he set and the standards he maintained, the whole profession owed incalculably much." These seem to be just the right qualifications for an official biographer and, in many respects, Mr. Harris has performed his task with complete success and has produced the biographical mausoleum in which the memory of a man like Spender can appropriately be laid to rest. The book bears upon its surface and in the writing signs of pressure and haste which were inevitable when an editor like Mr. Harris has to find time for the writing of a serious work. But he gives a clear picture of Spender, the man and journalist, as he himself sees him, eminently respectable, sagacious, cautious, conciliatory, influential. He tells the story of how Spender became a public figure of great political influence as editor of the *Westminster* and of even greater influence behind the scenes as the friend and adviser of Liberal Cabinet Ministers from the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary downwards.

But there are also dangers in a too sympathetic friend and colleague, with all the right qualifications, writing the official biography. The biographical mausoleum tends then to turn into an Albert Memorial. Not that Spender might not have felt fairly comfortable under an Albert Memorial. The Victorians and their great Queen had infallibly correct taste in the kind of decoration under which the eminently respectable should be buried or with which their memory should be adorned. The trouble is that one doubts whether Mr. Harris at the bottom of his heart has the same scale of values. The consequence is that the scale of values in this kind of biography gets altogether out of hand. Everything is rosy and most things are much too rosy. Mr. Harris works himself up to such a state of admiration that he calls the following eminently respectable, but dreary, sentence in a letter from Asquith to Spender "moving" and "a single sentence of impressive English":

> I shall always treasure it as an expression of the confidence and goodwill of old and loyal comrades-in-arms who have never failed me, or let their own faith fail, either in the campaigns which have led us to victory, or in the searching ordeals of discouragement and temporary defeat which are the surest test of constancy and courage.

And the over-valuation of Asquith's prose is of a piece with the over-valuation of the Asquith Government and of Spender himself. The praise given to Spender's books is much too high, particularly in the case of *Fifty Years of Europe*. Whether as writer, editor, politician, or man he appears without limitations or defects. But, in fact, he had his fair share of them. Some were the reverse side of his merits. He had a good deal of the stuffiness which goes with eminent respectability. He was, as he said himself, a "smoother," and smoothers can do a lot of harm as well as, occasionally, some good. There can be too much white cuff and kid-glove in the world; there was too much in Spender and in the *Westminster Gazette* and in the Asquith Cabinet. There can be too much of the smoothing out of Cabinet differences and Spender might have been a better man and history perhaps rather different if he had done less of it. It may be a good thing to smooth out politicians' differences, but in the process you sometimes have to smooth out statesmen's principles. The era of the Asquith Government was disastrous to Europe and the world. The responsibility for the disaster was great in the case of British Liberalism and Liberals. There are moments in history when respectability and a smoothing out of principles are eminently desirable; there are others, periods of profound social movement and great opportunities of progress, when both are fatal. The outcome of the period 1900–1914 might well have been different had Asquith, Grey, Haldane and Spender been less ready to compromise their principles and less concerned about smoothness and respectability.

It was the Liberal Imperialists, of whom Spender was one, who dished the Liberal Party and Liberalism. Except over the settlement of South Africa, they had their way, even when Campbell-Bannerman was alive, and after his death they controlled absolutely both the party and the Government. With regard to the South African settlement, there is a strange passage in Mr. Harris's book. He quotes a note from Asquith to Spender, said to have been written on June 15th, 1912, in which Asquith denies that there was any opposition in the Cabinet to C. B. with regard to the South African settlement and the Transvaal constitution. "Between ourselves, he had little or nothing to do with the matter and never bothered his head about it . . . There was never the faintest difference of opinion about it in the Cabinet." Mr. Harris accepts this as a statement of fact and remarks that "the assumption that C. B. was the chief author of the South African settlement has still sufficient currency to make this plain statement of the facts important." If Mr. Harris had looked at Spender's *Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*—which was written eleven years after this note of Asquith's—he would have seen that Asquith's account is a mis-statement of facts and that Spender himself must have known it to be such. It is worth while to quote Spender's own words:

> The crucial decision (with regard to the Constitution) was taken on February 8th, when, according to a colleague, the Prime Minister made one of the most impressive appeals that had ever been heard in a Cabinet. Arguing as always for the simple and direct approach to a great act of policy, and sweeping aside all minor objections, he carried the Cabinet unanimously to the decision that he desired. There was apparently at one moment risk of a different decision, for Mr. Lloyd George wrote on the following day: "I hope you will not regard it as pre-

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sumptuous of me if I congratulate you on the way you saved the Government from inevitable disaster yesterday. It was a magnificent piece of work." Another colleague, Lord Carrington, was no less enthusiastic: "You must allow me to congratulate you on having so magnificently saved the South African situation to-day. The party would have been in arms if we had capitulated to Lyttelton and the mine-owners—you pulled us through entirely and alone."

LEONARD WOOLF

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Satan. A Portrait. By EDWARD LANGTON. *Skeffington. 12s. 6d.*

Belief in demons is common enough, so is the mythological theme of a conflict between light and darkness, but what is distinctive about the Judaeo-Christian conception of Satan, and the ethical dualism of Persia and its derivatives, is the belief in a supreme and single principle of evil. There are evil spirits in both systems, of course, wicked angels, and Daēvas, but they are under the control of one dominating authority. Of the factors which were responsible for the remarkable teachings associated with the name of Zoroaster we know nothing, but the background of the Hebrew tradition is less obscure. The central feature of the ancient Jewish religion is the covenant, a contract believed to have been made with a God who promised to further the interests of his chosen people if they kept his commandments. The result was a concentration on ethical problems, and an interpretation in ethical terms of the disasters, which were bound to befall a people so precariously situated—they had broken their contract; the fault lay in themselves. In certain post-exilic writers, alone, do we find the four references to Satan which appear in the Old Testament: two in Job, one in Zechariah, and one in I Chron. xxi. 1. In Job Satan is in Heaven among the "Sons of God," and so he is when he appears as the accuser of Joshua, the High Priest. In Chronicles he is responsible for that numbering of the people which the anti-monarchist writer thought so iniquitous. It is in the Rabbinical literature and in the Jewish Apocryphal and Apocalyptic writings that the fall, through pride or lust after the daughters of men, is elaborated. Did they get the idea from Persia and adapt the independent "Ahriman" to their monotheistic hypothesis, or did they invent it to account for their disasters and for their own backsliding? Dr. Langton leans towards the second view, though he admits Persian influence, which, indeed, few could doubt. Jesus and Paul would seem to have believed in Satan, and the whole teaching of the New Testament can only be understood if one appreciates the background of Jewish thought against which it was adumbrated.

After discussing these origins Dr. Langton, with great learning, traces the extraordinary story of the development of the idea of Satan in Christian thought. It attracted to itself the mythological doctrine of the Dragon, the animistic conception of evil spirits that plague mankind, causing diseases and lesser hardships, the idea of demoniac possession, and the other-worldly imagery of a "Prince," or even "God," of this world. The story of the angelic fall persists; the core of the idea is the conception of a power working for evil against God, but the embellishments, the accretions, and the demonological gossip vary from age to age.

The Scholastics were credulous, the monks were more so, Luther was a believer, and the existence of Satan was widely accepted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The philosophically minded theologians of the nineteenth century woke—or some of them did—from their dogmatic slumbers and asked awkward questions. Did God create Satan? Thenceforward he fades from the picture, save for a voice here and there protesting that Jesus could not lie.

And now? Dr. Langton's book has been compiled for a purpose. He agrees with Joad that the evil in men's doings is so enormous that it cannot be put down to a mere inharmonious organisation of impulses, which under appropriate control are well enough. While Joad considers that the underlying unity of Value may be a person, Dr. Langton suggests that a person may underlie the Evil after which the soul of man also seems to hanker. Perhaps, in fact, the old boys were right after all. This is a serious consideration for those of us who believe in the objectivity of badness, and this is not the place to pursue it, but doubtless the main interest of Dr. Langton's fascinating story will be for the sociologist: it is a remarkable account of the transmutation of an idea in a changing cultural context. Of course another thought inevitably darts across our minds: "Politeness costs nothing, and you never know."

W. J. H. SPROTT

Leaving Them to Their Fate: The Ethics of Starvation. By VICTOR GOLLANCZ. (*Gollancz. 6d.*) **Lunacy in the Reich.** By A. B. RIMER. (*Gollancz. 6d.*) **The German Crisis.** (*National Peace Council. 4d.*)

In these three pamphlets the moral and economic problem of Germany is well summarised. Mr. Gollancz eloquently arraigns the amoral arguments now being used to enable us to forget that Christianity is not a national creed and that our religion demands that we feed even our enemies. Mr. Rimer deals with the economic folly of not only disarming Germany as of course we must, but of carrying out a counter-industrial revolution for the world's greater misery, and the National Peace Council reprints four excellent articles on Germany that recently appeared as a special section of the *Economist*.

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No. 850

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Present difficulties suggest that a sequel to Defoe's *Complete English Tradesman*, entitled *The Complete English Customer* would be timely. The usual prizes are offered for a maximum of 200 words from such a book. Entries by May 21.

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Set by V. S. Pritchett

The usual prizes are offered for a poetic fragment in the manner of Browning evoking the lost pleasures of the National Gallery concerts. Length not to exceed 20 lines.

Report by V. S. Pritchett

Painting, music, the hint of rendezvous: they were the proper subject for a Browning; the alien element was the air raid siren and the bomb which are not (I suspect) a subject for evocative verse. (No good verse was inspired by the Great Fire; though there was a respectable body of boasting and self-pitying doggerel.) Sawdust-Asgold came nearest to a possible Browning of the target area:

Healing our Blitz-nerves when most siren-riddled,
(I know at least why Nero, too, fiddled
When Rome was burning) we, all be-diddled,
Blear-eyed, raid-addled, yet with music we too

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